I spent £2,000 on a holiday face

BY AMANDA PLATELL

FEMAIL: PAGE 31

Daily Mail

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2024 dailymail.co.uk £1.10 85p to subscribers

Monumental stupidity: Two Just Stop Oil climate protesters spray orange powder paint at Stonehenge yesterday, as a member of the public steps in

IS NOTHING SACRED TO THE ECO CLOWNS?

After world heritage site Stonehenge is vandalised by Just Stop Oil, PM challenges major Labour donor who backed extremist group

ECO-FANATICS caused outrage yesterday by defacing Stonehenge on the eve of the summer solstice.

By **Sabrina Miller** and **Anya Markovitz**

Just Stop Oil activists used fire extinguishers to spray orange powder paint on at least three of the ancient stones before calmly sitting down cross-legged in front of the world-famous site.

Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer showed a rare united front in their condemnation of the stunt, which raised new questions about the historically intimate relationship between the Labour Party and Just Stop Oil.

The Prime Minister described it as a 'disgraceful act of vandalism', while the Labour leader branded the group 'pathetic'. Yet Labour was accused of 'faux outrage' after JSO boasted of planning its action 'days after the Labour Party recommitted to halting all future oil and gas licences' – a policy the activists claim was influenced by their extremist road-blocking tactics.

Mr Sunak rounded on major Labour backer Dale Vince, who, until last year,

Turn to Page 4

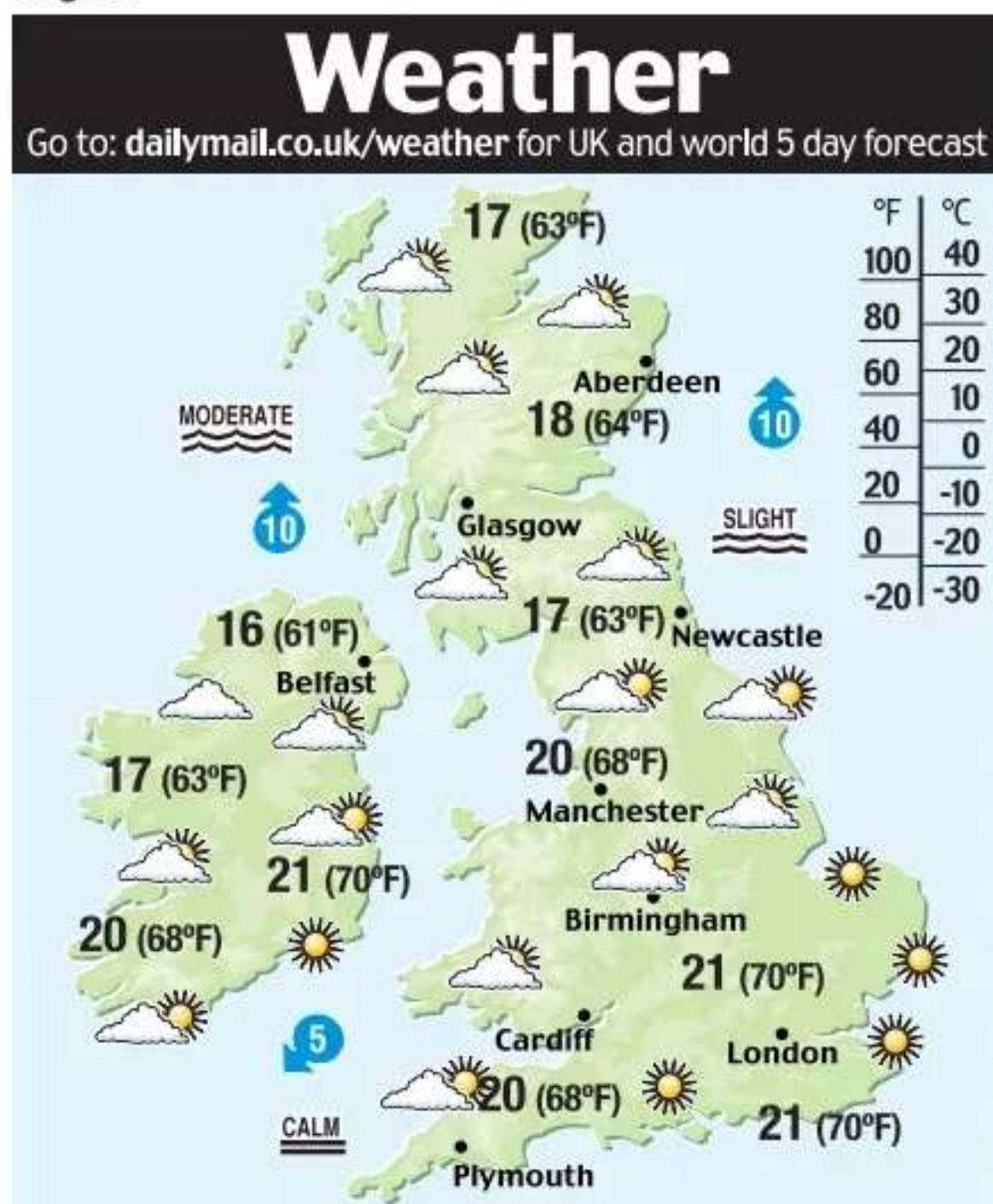
3 POLLS RAISE FEARS OF STARMER SUPERMAJORITY

SEE PAGE SIX

Weather

Go to: dailymail.co.uk/weather for UK and world 5 day forecast

17 (63ºF) Aberdeen 18 (64ºF) MODERATE 10 10 Glasgow SLIGHT 16 (61ºF) Belfast 17 (63ºF) Newcastle 17 (63ºF) 20 (68ºF) Manchester 21 (70ºF) 20 (68ºF) Birmingham 21 (70ºF) 5 Cardiff London CALM 20 (68ºF) 21 (70ºF) Plymouth

ºF	ºC
100	40
80	30
60	20
40	10
20	0
0	-10
-20	-20
	-30

Summary: Sunny spells

UK TODAY: Mainly dry with sunny spells, the best of these will be in the south and east. More cloud across Scotland and Northern Ireland with patchy outbreaks of light rain and drizzle. Max 22c.

Today's weather

	9am	12noon	3pm	6pm	9pm
London	16c	20c	22c	22c	19c
Plymouth	17c	20c	20c	18c	16c
Cardiff	16c	18c	19c	18c	16c
B'ham	15c	18c	20c	20c	18c
M'chester	15c	18c	20c	21c	18c
Newcastle	15c	18c	19c	18c	16c
Glasgow	13c	15c	16c	17c	15c
Aberdeen	14c	16c	16c	17c	15c
Belfast	13c	15c	17c	18c	16c

5 day forecast

	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue
London	23c	21c	24c	25c	26c
Plymouth	18c	19c	20c	21c	23c
Cardiff	20c	19c	22c	24c	25c
B'ham	21c	20c	23c	24c	25c
M'chester	21c	19c	20c	23c	24c
Newcastle	22c	19c	22c	22c	23c
Glasgow	18c	18c	18c	20c	22c
Aberdeen	18c	19c	19c	21c	21c
Belfast	17c	18c	19c	21c	23c

Europe forecast

	today	c	f	tomorrow	c	f
Amsterdam	fair	20	68	thunder	19	66
Brussels	rain	20	68	thunder	19	66
Frankfurt	rain	23	73	thunder	24	75
Geneva	showers	24	75	thunder	22	72
Lisbon	cloudy	22	72	sun	24	75
Madrid	rain	22	72	fair	28	82
Paris	rain	21	70	thunder	21	70
Rome	sun	32	90	sun	31	88

Around the world yesterday

Noon local time

	weather	c	f		weather	c	f		weather	c	f
Algiers	Sunny	30	86	Florence	Sunny	30	86	New Delhi	Sunny	41	106
Amsterdam	Cloudy	20	68	Geneva	Sunny	28	82	New York	Sunny	29	84
Athens	Sunny	36	97	Gibraltar	Sunny	23	73	Nice	Fair	24	75
Auckland	Fair	15	59	Guernsey	Sunny	17	63	Oslo	Fair	20	68
Bahrain	Sunny	46	115	Helsinki	Showers	17	63	Palma	Fair	25	77
Barcelona	Fair	25	77	Hong Kong	Showers	31	88	Paris	Cloudy	19	66
Basra	Sunny	47	117	Innsbruck	Sunny	30	86	Perth	Sunny	17	63
Beijing	Sunny	34	93	Istanbul	Sunny	30	86	Prague	Fair	23	73
Beirut	Sunny	29	84	Jersey	Sunny	18	64	Rhodes	Sunny	31	88
Belfast	Sunny	15	59	Larnaca	Sunny	32	90	Riga	Rain	17	63
Belgrade	Sunny	34	93	Las Palmas	Sunny	23	73	Rome	Sunny	29	84
Berlin	Cloudy	18	64	Lisbon	Showers	20	68	Singapore	Thunder	30	86
Biarritz	Fair	20	68	London	Cloudy	20	68	Stockholm	Fair	18	64
Brisbane	Sunny	19	66	Los Angeles	Sunny	22	72	Strasbourg	Fair	24	75
Brussels	Cloudy	17	63	Luxor	Sunny	40	104	Sydney	Sunny	15	59
Bucharest	Sunny	32	90	Madrid	Fair	21	70	Tangier	Fair	23	73
Budapest	Sunny	31	88	Malaga	Sunny	26	79	Tel Aviv	Sunny	31	88
Cairo	Sunny	32	90	Malta	Sunny	32	90	Tenerife	Sunny	25	77
Cape Town	Fair	15	59	Melbourne	Sunny	12	54	Tokyo	Sunny	29	84
Casablanca	Sunny	24	75	Mexico City	Sunny	25	77	Toronto	Sunny	30	86
Copenhagen	Fair	17	63	Miami	Fair	31	88	Tunis	Sunny	34	93
Corfu	Sunny	34	93	Milan	Sunny	30	86	Vancouver	Fair	17	63
Dubai	Sunny	44	111	Montreal	Fair	30	86	Venice	Sunny	27	81
Dublin	Fair	15	59	Moscow	Sunny	23	73	Vienna	Sunny	29	84
Dubrovnik	Sunny	30	86	Mumbai	Thunder	28	82	Warsaw	Thunder	31	88
Faro	Fair	20	68	Nairobi	Showers	23	73	Wellington	Fair	11	52

Moon and Sun

MOON rises: 8.33pm, sets: 2.49am
Sun rises London: 4.43am, sets: 9.21pm
Manchester rises: 4.39am, sets: 9.41pm
HIGH TIDE London Bridge: 1.36pm
Liverpool: 11.05pm

Extremes (24 hrs to 6pm y'day)

Warmest: Heathrow, Greater London, 22c (72f). **Coldest:** Braemar, Aberdeenshire, 1c (34f). **Wettest:** Sutton Bonington, Nottinghamshire, 0.45ins. **Sunniest:** Belfast, Co Antrim, 13.9hrs.

We got there! Sunak hails fall in inflation

By **Jason Groves** and **John-Paul Ford Rojas**

RISHI Sunak promised fresh tax cuts yesterday after inflation fell to its lowest level for three years.

The Consumer Prices Index has dropped to the 2 per cent target for the first time since July 2021, easing cost-of-living pressures and paving the way for interest rate cuts.

The Prime Minister, who put tackling inflation at the heart of his economic plans, declared: 'We've got there.' And he said the return to economic stability would pave the way for more tax cuts if the Tories win next month's election.

He told LBC Radio: 'It's very good news because the last few years have been really tough for everybody... But we've stuck to a plan, we've taken the action needed, it wasn't always easy, but we've got there, and inflation is back to target. It is because of that economic stability that we have restored, which was my priority when I got this job, that we have now been able to start cutting people's taxes.

'If I win this election, I want to keep doing more of that.'

Mr Sunak has put the tax divide with Labour at the centre of his election campaign. The Tory manifesto sets out plans for tax cuts totalling £17.2 billion a year, including a 2p cut in National Insurance, abolition of NI for the self-employed and a guarantee that the state pension will never be taxed.

Labour's manifesto includes £8.5 billion a year in tax rises – and the Tories claim the party will need to find a further £38.5 billion just to fund its plans. Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves said the fall in inflation was 'welcome', but added: 'Unlike Conservative ministers, I'm not going to claim that everything is all fine – that the cost-of-living crisis is over – because I know that pressures on family finances are still acute.'

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt suggested that the Bank of England should move quickly to ease the pressure on homeowners, but the Bank's monetary policy committee is expected to keep interest rates on holds when it meets today.

The fall in inflation was helped by a steep reduction in food price rises to 1.7 per cent. Food inflation had topped 19 per cent at the height of the cost-of-living crisis.

But the markets suggest rates will remain at 5.25 per cent today. There is only a one-in-three chance they will be cut. Traders say September is the likeliest date for a cut.

Comment – Page 14

ELECTION 2024 PAGES 6-11

COMMENTARY
By **Alex Brummer**
CITY EDITOR

Why Bank must cut rates today (but won't)

BRITAIN has slain the inflation dragon and, as the nation gets ready to go to the polls, Rishi Sunak can claim an economic triumph.

Of course, it is Andrew Bailey, governor of the independent Bank of England, who has the best claim on this success because it was he who did the most to put the brakes on the rising cost of living by raising interest rates to 5.25 per cent and slowing the supply of credit to the financial system.

But Chancellor Jeremy Hunt and the Prime Minister also made significant contributions to returning the inflation rate to the 2 per cent target.

By bringing discipline to the public finances, they made sure the shocks to the system caused by the pandemic and Russia's war on Ukraine did not become embedded. As chancellor, Mr Sunak also stiffened Mr Bailey's resolve by quietly reminding the Bank, when it made excuses for inflation spiralling out of control, that it had a responsibility to meet the target at all times.

Moreover, in the face of politically sensitive strikes on the railways, in the NHS and other public services, the Government held its nerve, refusing to agree to excessive pay rises and, in doing so, preventing wage-price spiral which doomed the Labour governments of the 1970s.

Now the target has been met, Mr Bailey and the interest rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee should vote today to cut the base rate immediately.

However, despite the Bank's much-trumpeted independence – a status granted by the Blair/Brown New Labour government in 1997 to give it the power to act in the best interests of households and businesses rather than the government – it is widely accepted that it will be reluctant to lower rates in the middle of an election campaign.

At a time when much of the government apparatus is in 'purdah', such a move could be considered too much of a political hot potato.

But the case for the Bank of England to cut rates is overwhelming.

It would provide an immediate boost to the economy by encouraging more lending to consumers and enterprise.

Most significantly, it would signal to the financial markets and mortgage lenders that the trend in home loan costs is on the way down, helping consumers to meet monthly repayments and giving a much-needed boost to a moribund residential property market.

Rather than wait for the election result, the Bank should act now to give added momentum to the nascent recovery.

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England hero Jude and the Wag who wasn't

Did the Pretty Little Thing model said to be Bellingham's girlfriend miss first England game because, er, she isn't dating him at all?

Model mystery: Jude Bellingham, pictured in Skims underwear, has never been spotted with Laura Celia Valk

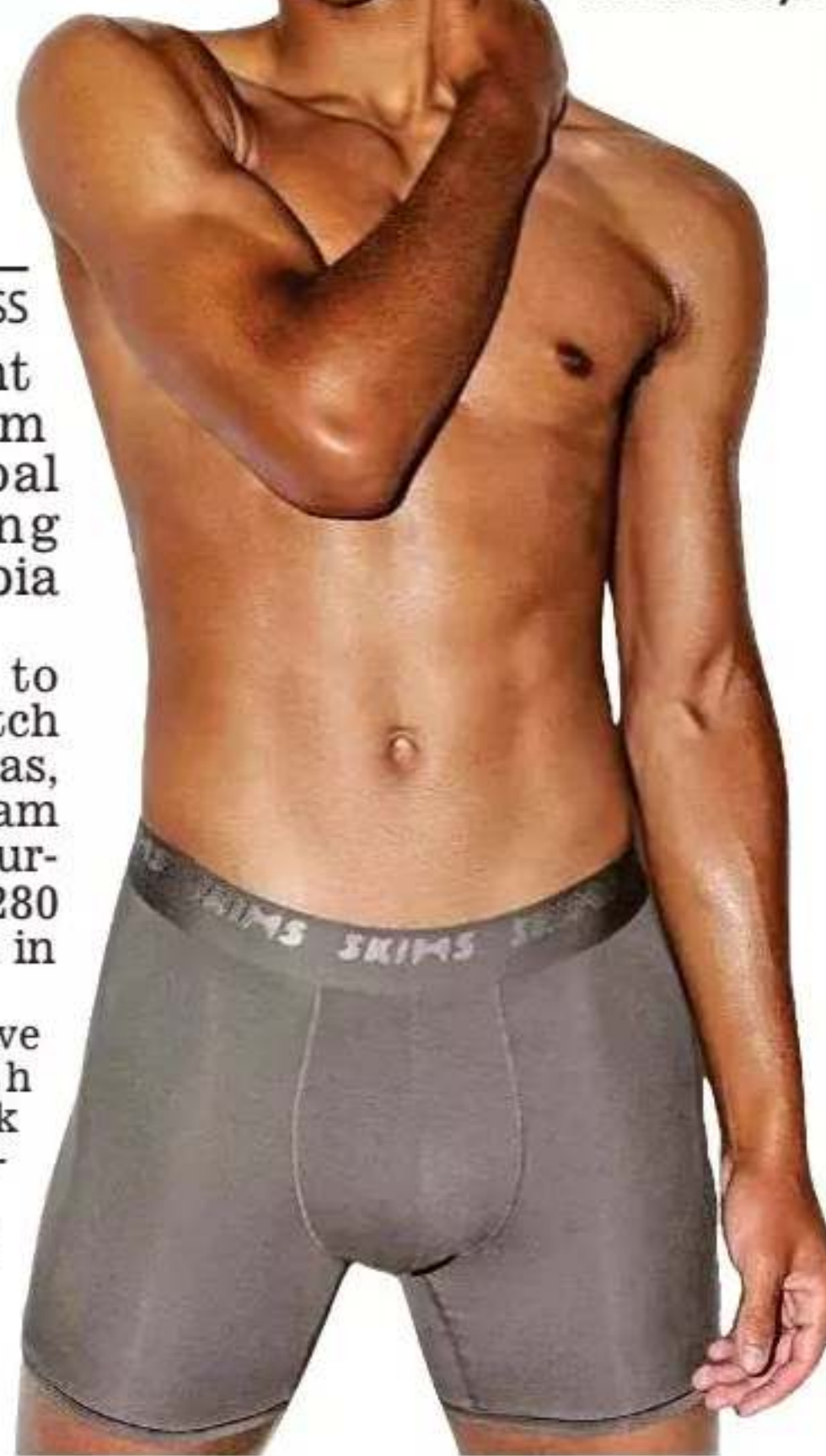
By **Katie Hind**

CONSULTANT EDITOR SHOWBUSINESS

SHE was notably absent when Jude Bellingham scored the winning goal in England's opening Euro game against Serbia on Sunday.

As the WAGs gathered to support their partners, Dutch beauty Laura Celia Valk was, according to her Instagram account, enjoying a glamourous trip to Paris – some 280 miles away from the match in Gelsenkirchen, Germany.

In fact, yesterday, on the eve of England's clash with Denmark, in Frankfurt, Ms Valk was still in the city of love without Bellingham.

But now, the Mail can reveal the mystery surrounding their 'romance' – because they don't appear to be in a relationship at all. Instead, weeks of rumours were prompted by a publicity stunt orchestrated by an opportunistic executive at Manchester-based clothing company Pretty Little Thing, where Ms Valk is a model.

It was at a glamourous lingerie photoshoot in Madrid that she apparently confided in make-up artists and hairdressers that she and Bellingham, 20, had got close. In details believed to have been leaked by the firm to a red top newspaper, Ms Valk, 25, was said to be 'completely smitten' and had spent time at his home in the Spanish city where he plays for Real Madrid.

It was also claimed she had seen him play at Real's Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

And while neither party has commented on reports of a relationship, two months on from Ms Valk's photoshoot the pair still haven't been seen together and there are claims that Bellingham is still on the exclusive dating app Raya.

A source close to Pretty Little Thing said that when bosses overheard that she knew Jude, an employee at the company contacted the newspaper.

'It was one of those rumours that grew legs and there doesn't seem to be an awful lot to it. But what was evident from the leak is that it got Pretty Little Thing a lot of publicity.

'The story that Laura and Jude were dating went everywhere, and each time the story was repeated, PLT got a mention. It's quite clever, really.

'The world has been waiting for a glimpse of Laura but it doesn't look like that is going to happen, she seems to be doing her own thing in Paris and having a jolly old time, too.'

Ms Valk regularly shares bikini and lingerie snaps with her 370,000 Instagram followers. As well as modelling, she owns a social media consultancy agency, having studied creative business at the Amsterdam University of Applied Science.

England midfielder Jude was previously linked to R&B singer Rmarni after signing up to Raya. He also dated model Asantewa Chitty and American TikTok star Azra Mian.

After moving to Real Madrid last summer in an £85.5 million transfer from German side Borussia Dortmund, Bellingham is arguably the most marketable young sportsperson in the world. He already has a partnership with Lucozade and his starring role in the recent Adidas advert highlights his billing as a global name.

It was also announced last week that he had signed a lucrative contract with Kim Kardashian's fashion brand Skims, joining other big names including singer Usher, footballer Neymar Jr and NFL star Patrick Mahomes.

Sport – See back page

PUGH

ENGLAND v DENMARK

'He's a Great Dane! Who did you think he was going to support?!'

Spurs' Danish star who loved his wife so much he decided to marry her twice

By **Andy Dolan**

DENMARK'S Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg will be familiar with many of his opponents when they take on England in Group C this evening.

In fact, the Spurs midfielder is clearly fond of familiarity – so much so that he married his wife twice in two years.

Hojbjerg first tied the knot with Josephine Siw Nelson in a ceremony so low key even his own mother was not invited. But two years after the union at Copenhagen city hall the pair walked down the aisle again at a lavish ceremony in the city's Osterbro district, close to the national stadium.

Following the ceremony, the 28-year-old posted a photograph of the couple in their wedding finery along with the caption: 'Mr and Mrs (for the second time).'

It's wedding season in the Danish squad: Andreas Christensen wed model and influencer Katrine Friis, 26, in a civil ceremony earlier this month. Ms Friis announced her marriage to the former Chelsea defender on Instagram with a photo and the message: 'Cheers to for ever.'

At Qatar in 2022, the Danish football association refused to fly the players' partners out to the World Cup to avoid further enriching Qatar's economy.

Happy couple: Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg and wife Josephine

Achtung! Weak beer gets boot

ENGLAND'S match against Denmark tonight has been classified as 'high risk' by Frankfurt police. But there will be no ban on the sale of high-strength alcohol at the 47,000-seat Waldstadion.

Officers' priority would be 'de-escalating' any potential trouble and using a 'communicative approach'. A police spokesman said: 'We have this city under control.'

Only 2.8 per cent lager was on sale at the Arena AufSchalke in Gelsenkirchen last week for England's 1-0 victory over Serbia, at the insistence of local police. Violence broke out in the city centre before the game when fans clashed in a bar housing Serbian supporters.

Stepping in: Members of the public try to restrain Just Stop Oil protester Rajan Naidu at Stonehenge yesterday

Oxford student and Quaker, 73, arrested at ancient site

Continued from Page One

bankrolled the environmental protest movement. He said: 'This is a disgraceful act of vandalism. Just Stop Oil should be ashamed of their activists and they and anyone associated with them, including a certain Labour party donor, should issue a condemnation of this shameful act immediately.'

Energy Secretary Claire Coutinho added: 'Labour's faux outrage at the Stonehenge vandalism would carry a lot more weight if Just Stop Oil hadn't also thanked Labour for enacting "their demands" in their press release today. We must not allow Britain's energy policy to be dictated by fanatics.'

Labour has accepted more than £5million from Mr Vince, including £1million after the election was called. The green energy tycoon supported JSO from its foundation and donated at least £340,000 before cutting off the cash last October.

Sir Keir has previously come under fire for refusing to return any money donated by Mr Vince and has vehemently denied claims that the Ecotricity boss wields any influence over Labour policy.

Mr Vince said: 'Since Rishi Sunak has asked me personally to comment, I will. I don't support what JSO did today.'

But the close relationship with

'Policy dictated by fanatics'

Mr Vince, who Sir Keir met just days before revealing a plan to block all new oil and gas licences in the North Sea last year – coupled with the party's previous opposition to toughening up laws around disruptive protests – has left questions over whether Labour can be trusted to crack down on such behaviour.

Sir Keir tweeted yesterday: 'The damage done to Stonehenge is outrageous. Just Stop Oil are pathetic. Those responsible must face the full force of the law.'

Footage of the shocking incident at noon yesterday shows horrified onlookers shouting 'no' while trying to drag the vandals away from the 5,000-year-old site. Police arrested two protesters – named by the group as Rajan Naidu, 73, from Birmingham, and Oxford student Niamh Lynch, 21 – on 'suspicion of damaging the ancient monument'. Lynch said in a statement: 'Stonehenge at solstice is all about celebrating the natural world – but look at the state it's in! Standing inert for generations works well for stones – not climate policy.'

Naidu, who is understood to be a Quaker, added: 'Either we end the fossil-fuel era, or the fossil-fuel era will end us.'

Around 8,000 people gathered at Stonehenge to mark the longest day of the year in 2023, with similar numbers expected today. English Heritage said it expected the solstice turnout to go ahead from 7pm until 8am tomorrow.

Conservative minister Simon Hoare joined the chorus of criticism last night. 'The full weight of the law is needed. I would incarcerate them on an old oil rig.'

Fellow Tory Alex Stafford said: 'It's absolutely disgusting – these mindless vandals have no appreciation for our history and heritage. All they can do is destroy rather than create.' Nick Kendrick, 55, who has been a Stonehenge tour guide for more than 30 years, said: 'There are 79 different species of lichen which grow on those rocks.

'These lichen are alive and help protect the stone and (they) will definitely have been harmed by this idiotic stunt.'

Just Stop Oil said: 'Continuing to burn coal, oil and gas will result in the death of millions. We have to come together to defend humanity or we risk everything.'

Sit-in: Climate activists Rajan Naidu, left, and Niamh Lynch calmly sit down after their paint protest at the historic site

Acid attacks increase by 75% in just one year

By **Rebecca Camber**
Crime and Security Editor

ACID attacks rose by 75 per cent last year – with women making up half of all victims.

Shocking figures show the highest number of offences were recorded by Northumbria Police, followed by Scotland Yard.

The research by charity Acid Survivors Trust International (Asti) found there were 1,244 offences involving corrosives last year – up from 710 in 2022. Yet data from police forces revealed only a tiny fraction of cases led to criminal charges.

It is the second consecutive year that offences have soared, after a 69 per cent rise in 2022.

Jaf Shah, executive director at Asti, said: 'Our new data shows

'Substances being weaponised'

that acid violence is an escalating problem in our country, with women increasingly at risk.'

He urged the incoming Government to increase funding for prevention schemes, restrict access to corrosive substances and address socio-economic issues which 'facilitate acid attacks and violent crime more generally'.

Mr Shah added: 'Additionally, while there are laws in place that restrict access to corrosive substances, the growing number of offences shows that the Government and businesses must tighten the enforcement of these regulations and do more to stop corrosive substances being weaponised to cause devastating harm.'

Aristo's 'baby death' jury is discharged

AN aristocrat accused of killing her baby faces the prospect of a retrial after the jury was discharged in a five-month case estimated to have cost millions.

Constance Marten, 37, and her lover Mark Gordon, 50, denied causing the death of their girl Victoria and four other charges.

The couple went missing in January last year and Marten gave birth to their fifth child in secret after their previous four children were taken into care.

They vanished in Bolton and ended up camping in freezing conditions on the South Downs where the infant died – with her body found in a Lidl bag.

The jury, after 72 hours and 33 minutes, were unable to reach verdicts. Judge Mark Lucraft KC, the Recorder of London, told them: 'You have shown truly exceptional examples of dedication to public service.'

The CPS will decide on a retrial in the next seven days.

Wills and Camilla, the winning Ascot team

Charming moment: The Queen and Prince William with the Countess of Halifax

Fashion frontrunner: Carole Middleton and her husband Michael

High spirits: Princess Eugenie, Mike and Zara Tindall, and Princess Beatrice were among the racing royals yesterday

By **Jessica Green**

THEY may have been missing their other halves – but Queen Camilla and Prince William proved they were quite the power team again yesterday in a joint appearance at Ascot.

The Prince of Wales, 41, and his stepmother, 76, waved to crowds as they joined the Earl and Countess of Halifax in the traditional carriage procession.

The hard-working pair have teamed up for various royal events this year after the King and the Princess of Wales were diagnosed with cancer. But yesterday marked their return to double duties since leading senior royals at the Commonwealth Day service in March.

Although racegoers would have been sad to miss Kate yesterday, her family were still out in force.

The princess's parents Carole and Michael Middleton made their first public appearance since her cancer diagnosis at the second day of the meeting. Mrs Middleton, 69, looked elegant in a £350 pale dress from Self-Portrait but had to be rescued by her son-in-law when her heel became stuck in the turf.

Other family members at the Berkshire racecourse included Mike Tindall and Princess Eugenie, who was in high spirits as she watched the riders.

Zara Tindall, who accompanied grieving Lady Gabriella Windsor on the opening day of the event, was also back on day two. But this time she and her cousin Princess Beatrice were neck-and-neck in the style stakes, wearing almost identical floral frocks.

The five-day meeting, which ends on Saturday, will see five of the King's horses run over the week.

High-strength vape use soaring among the young

By **Kate Pickles**
Health Editor

THE number of people using high-strength vapes has soared almost ten-fold in as little as three years, a study has revealed.

Research shows a third of vapers opted for high-strength nicotine in January this year, compared to just 3.8 per cent on average between July 2016 and June 2021.

The biggest rise was among those aged 18-24, with more than half now using the most powerful e-cigarettes. But large rises were also seen in older age groups.

The team at University College London found that vapers using disposable e-cigarettes tended to use higher-strength nicotine. Dr Sarah Jackson, the study's lead author, said: 'The timing of the rise in popularity of high-strength vapes coincided with the introduction of new disposable vapes, many of which contain e-liquids with nicotine concentrations at the upper end of the legal limit.'

She added that disposable vapes are particularly popular among younger vapers, 'so a greater increase in the use of high-strength e-liquids among 18-24-year-olds is not surprising'.

Researchers looked at survey responses since 2016 from 7,314 adult vapers in England as well as more recent data from Wales and Scotland. They classified e-liquids containing 20mg/ml of nicotine – the UK legal limit – as high strength. The study also found an increase in the proportion of vapers using disposables and pod devices who did not know how strong they were.

Writing in the journal Addiction, they suggest better labelling is needed to ensure nicotine strength was clear to consumers.

The Government has proposed setting three categories of tax on e-liquid, with the lowest applied to nicotine-free liquid, and the highest to e-liquid containing 11 mg/ml or more of nicotine.

But Dr Sharon Cox at UCL said such a move could 'result in people using a lower, cheaper strength and vaping more', adding: 'It therefore may increase the amount of liquid used and vapers' exposure to potential toxicants.'

Three major polls warn of wipeout for the Tories

By **Jason Groves** and **Harriet Line**

THREE major polls last night appeared to confirm that the Conservatives are facing the prospect of an election wipeout.

The trio of polls all point towards Sir Keir Starmer entering No 10 on the back of a landslide Labour majority next month.

But they suggest that dozens of Tory seats are still in play, potentially making the difference between a heavy 1997-style defeat and total wipeout.

A Savanta poll for the Daily Telegraph predicted that Sir Keir is on course for the biggest majority in history, with Labour securing more than 500 seats.

In this scenario, the Conservatives would be reduced to a rump of 53 MPs, with even Rishi Sunak becoming the first serving Prime Minister to lose his seat at an election.

The Tories would be only just ahead of the Lib Dems on 50 seats, leaving them in danger of not even qualifying as the official opposition.

A separate YouGov poll predicted Labour would hold a majority of more than 200, picking up 425 seats. The Conservatives would win 108 seats, with a string of Cabinet ministers kicked out, including Jeremy Hunt, Penny Mordaunt and Mel Stride. The Lib Dems would win 67 seats.

A third poll, conducted by think tank More in Common, predicted a Blair-style Labour majority of 162. In this scenario, Labour would win 406 seats, but the Tories would hold on to 155 and the Lib Dems on 49.

Executive director Luke Tryl, a former Tory adviser said: 'The fact that this projection showing the Conservatives barely holding 150 seats is one of the most favourable to the Conservatives shows how deep a hole the party finds itself in – with barely two weeks to go for them to change the dial.'

However, the More in Common poll, conducted for the New Agents podcast, found that there are also almost 100 seats where the Conservatives are less than five per cent behind, making it possible they could yet avoid disaster on July 4.

The YouGov survey predicted Reform would win five seats, but the other two polls suggested Nigel Farage's party would win none. A fourth, much smaller poll, suggested Mr Farage was on course to win the race to be Clacton's next MP with the biggest swing in modern electoral history.

All three surveys relied on much larger sample sizes than standard polls and used the latest techniques to forecast results in every constituency.

With just two weeks until polling day, they will add to rising Tory panic about the possibility of complete wipeout and will fuel warnings about the potential danger of handing Sir Keir a supermajority. The scale of Tory defeat could also have a major impact on any contest to succeed Mr Sunak.

The Savanta survey suggested that business secretary Kemi Badenoch and security minister Tom Tugendhat would be the only leading contenders to survive the cull.

Other potential candidates, such as Ms Mordaunt, Defence Secretary Grant Shapps, former immigration minister Robert Jenrick and former home secretaries Priti Patel and Suella Braverman, are all fighting to hold on.

Mr Sunak yesterday insisted he remained 'focused on winning', adding: 'The only poll that matters is the one on polling day'. But Welsh Secretary David TC Davies said the Tories 'can't hide' from the dire polls.

Mr Sunak warned Tory voters flirting with Reform that they risk getting 'literally the opposite' of what they want.

The PM said that backing Mr Farage's party would make it more likely that Sir Keir will win the keys to No 10.

'If you are someone who wants lower taxes, if you want your pension protected, if you want a more sensible approach to Net Zero and you want migration being controlled... then it's only the Conservative Party and me that's going to deliver that for you,' he told LBC.

Small boats warning

TRAFFICKING gangs will be 'rubbing their hands with glee' if Labour win the election, the Home Secretary warned last night. James Cleverly made the remark after it emerged that Tuesday saw 882 small boat arrivals – the highest number for more than 18 months.

The Conservatives have vowed to plough on with compulsory removals of 'irregular' migrants to Rwanda if they retain power. Sir Keir Starmer has said Labour would immediately cancel the Rwanda deal.

Mr Cleverly said: 'People smugglers are vile and criminal, but they're not stupid.

'A Labour government led by a man with a history of being weak on immigration and the scrapping of the Rwanda scheme will be used as a selling point around the world. The smugglers will be rubbing their hands with glee if Labour win the election.'

'I'm afraid this is going to hurt quite a bit'

The merry wives

Selfie: A local with the quartet

THE wives of Rishi Sunak, Jeremy Hunt and James Cleverly hit the General Election campaign trail yesterday as they joined forces to push the Conservative cause.

Akshata Murty, the Prime Minister's wife, met up with Lucia Hunt, the Chancellor's wife, and Susie Cleverly, the wife of the Home Secretary, in the village of Fordham in Cambridgeshire.

The trio were also joined by Cul-

Supermajority

By **Martin Beckford**
Policy Editor

A HUGE majority would give Labour the power to 'rig' future elections and stay in power for a generation by giving an extra eight million people the vote, the Tories warned last night.

The Conservatives claimed that Sir Keir Starmer wants to expand the electorate to include huge numbers of migrants, as well as teenagers, and even prisoners.

They predicted that the new voters would be Left-leaning and so shift the dynamic of the electorate and cancel out pensioners' ballots.

Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden said last night: 'Keir Starmer has long advocated giving EU migrants and prisoners the vote, along with 16-year-olds.

'A large majority would give him a blank cheque to do just that, locking

# of Westminster

MP LUCY FRAZER

JAMES CLEVERLY'S WIFE

By **Greg Heffer**

ture Secretary Lucy Frazer, the local Tory candidate, as they delivered leaflets and discussed matters with the residents.

Ms Murty – dubbed Britain's 'first lady' – has become known as the PM's 'secret weapon' as he bids to remain in power beyond July 4.

The heiress of an Indian billionaire has often been spotted canvassing since Mr Sunak called for the vote last month.

On a fashion note, while the quartet had all opted for trousers, there was a big difference in their choice of tops.

Mrs Hunt opted for a Fabienne Chapot design at £109.99, Ms Murty went for a Boden jumper at £95, Ms Frazer wore a Hale Bob blouse costing £249 while Mrs Cleverly seemed to be in a Zara creation.

Now Sunak protection officer is arrested 'after he bet on date of the election'

By **Rebecca Camber**
Crime and Security Editor

ONE OF Rishi Sunak's close protection officers has been arrested for allegedly betting on the timing of the General Election.

The unnamed officer working in the Prime Minister's protection team is said to have placed several bets on the date of the vote.

Scotland Yard confirmed yesterday that a constable from the Met's elite Royalty and Specialist Protection Command had been arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office.

The force were contacted by the Gambling Commission last week after it launched a probe into suspicious transactions. The value of the wager under investigation is unknown.

Mr Sunak's decision to call a snap election in July was a closely guarded secret, catching many MPs off-guard.

But police close protection officers, who are privy to his every movements, would have

'Taken into custody'

been among a select group of people tipped off in advance.

The officer under investigation has not been named, but has been removed from operational duties.

Yesterday a Scotland Yard spokesman said the force had launched an internal probe, adding: 'We can confirm that on Friday, 14 June, the Met were contacted by the Gambling Commission who informed us that they were investigating alleged bets made by a Police Constable from the Met's Royalty and Specialist Protection Command, which were related to the timing of the General Election.

'The matter was referred to officers in the Met's Directorate of Professional Standards, who opened an investigation, and the officer was removed from operational duties.

'The officer was subsequently arrested on Monday 17 June on suspicion of misconduct in public office. He was taken into custody and bailed pending further enquiries. The matter has also been referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

'The Gambling Commission continues to lead the investigation into the alleged betting offences.'

It is the second time that those close to Mr Sunak have been accused of gambling on the election date. Last week it was alleged that his closest parliamentary aide, Craig Williams put a £100 bet on a July election three days before the PM named the date.

Mr Williams, who is Mr Sunak's parliamentary private secretary, is said to have placed the bet with bookmaker Ladbrokes in his Montgomeryshire constituency May 19. He later said: 'I put a flutter on the general election some weeks ago. This has resulted in some routine inquiries and I will fully co-operate. I don't want it to be a distraction, I should have thought how it looks.'

Ladbrokes referred the case to the Gambling Commission, which is understood to have begun an inquiry. The Commission confirmed it 'is investigating the possibility of offences concerning the date of the election'.

Millionaires backing Keir can 'afford it'

By **Martin Beckford**
Policy Editor

RISHI Sunak has hit back at wealthy businessmen supporting Sir Keir Starmer, arguing that they could afford tax rises but the rest of the country could not.

He pointed out that Manchester United co-owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe and Phones4U founder John Caudwell – former Tory supporters – are two of Britain's richest men.

It came after the pair, along with ex-Dragons' Den star Theo Paphitis, said they were backing Labour.

Sir Jim claimed people had 'had enough' of the Conservatives, and former Tory donor Mr Caudwell said he was 'despairing' about the party's recent record in power.

Asked on LBC radio about their support for Labour, Mr Sunak replied: 'They're two of Britain's richest men. They can probably afford Labour's tax rises.'

Sir Keir later accused him of 'talking nonsense' about Labour's tax plans and branded Mr Caudwell's support a 'serious' move.

could help Labour 'rig' future polls

Labour in power for a generation. He knows these are groups which would overwhelmingly support Labour and cancel out the votes of the Britons he wants to tax to the hilt. For millions of older voters, this could be the last time to make their vote count.'

It comes after Rishi Sunak told the Mail this week that Sir Keir's bid to lower the voting age was not 'principled' and just an 'electorally helpful' way to 'entrench his power'. Currently 46.6million people across Britain can take part in general elections. To be eligible to vote you have to be over 18; a British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen; and either living in the UK or a citizen who has previously been registered here.

Labour's manifesto confirms that if it wins next month it will lower the voting age, which will enfranchise an estimated 1.5million more teenagers at the next election. 'We will increase the engagement of young people in our vibrant democracy, by giving 16- and 17-year-olds the right to vote in all elections,' the document stated.

If EU nationals with the right to live in the UK permanently were also given the vote, it would add another 6.6million to the electorate. Senior Labour figures have previously spoken out in favour of the move, with Sir Keir including 'full voting rights for EU nationals' as a pledge in his 2020 leadership campaign.

In 2022, Labour MPs and peers tabled amendments calling for the 'enfranchisement of certain foreign nationals at parliamentary elections', although they were never voted on.

And the Tories claim that 27,702 prisoners across the UK serving four years or less could also be given the vote, based on plans in Labour-run Wales. The Welsh Government insisted in 2022 it was 'committed to enfranchising some prisoners', with a 2020 plan for local elections saying it would cover those in custody 'serving a custodial sentence of less than 4 years'.

Last night Labour insisted it is not planning to give the vote to migrants or prisoners. A spokesman said: 'This reeks of desperation and is a lie. Labour will allow 16- and 17-year-olds to vote, and will not extend voting rights beyond that.'

Don't touch council

With Labour dithering over key issue, poll delivers stark warning

MORE than half of voters are against revaluing council tax bands, according to a new poll by Lord Ashcroft.

Labour has sown confusion over its plans for council tax – with senior party figures giving different answers when asked whether they will overhaul the system.

Council tax banding in England has not changed since 1991, and has been criticised for not reflecting how house prices have changed around the country.

By **Harriet Line**
Deputy Political Editor

But 52 per cent of voters believe revaluing council tax bands to base them on current property prices would 'just be an excuse to charge more', according to the Ashcroft research, shared exclusively with the Mail. Only 30 per cent think a revaluation would make council tax fairer.

With two weeks until the election, Lord Ashcroft's poll also gives Labour a 25-point lead, and puts the Tories and Reform UK neck-and-neck on 18 points.

Sir Keir Starmer continues to lead Rishi Sunak when voters were asked who would make the best prime minister, by 38 per cent to 17 per cent.

And 39 per cent believe the Labour leader would do a better job at running the economy, compared to 24 per cent who back the Prime Minister.

The poll, carried out from June 13 to 17, with a sample size of 5,187, also found almost half of voters who are dissatisfied with the current Tory Government have little faith in Labour.

Some 46 per cent said that Sir Keir and his party 'probably won't do a good job but they can hardly be worse than the Government we have now'.

Stephen Glover
SEE PAGE 14

However the poll found that while Tory policies are popular, the party is not. Pledges such as the Help to Buy scheme, the 'triple-lock plus' on pensions and reducing legal migration had more support from voters when the party proposing it was not named.

Lord Ashcroft, writing in today's Mail, said that was 'especially bad news for the Tories, since it reveals how little they can do to change their fortunes'.

He writes: 'As the day of reckoning approaches the Tories will be tempted to turn their fire on Labour and Keir Starmer.

'Voters will not take the Conservatives' word about anything, let alone the qualities of their opponents, but they already have plenty of doubts about the likely new regime.

'Only one in three expect Labour to bring more stability and competence in government, lower NHS waiting times or improved public services; fewer than three in ten anticipate more jobs, opportunity and prosperity or more manageable living costs; and fewer than one in six think there will be stricter immigration controls or a tougher approach to crime.'

Among voters who backed the Tories in 2019 but say they are unlikely to vote for the party this time, 41 per cent say the Conservatives need a 'huge defeat so they get the message'.

But 40 per cent say that if Labour are going to win, they want there to be 'enough Conservative MPs left to form a strong Opposition and hold the new government to account'.

However, 44 per cent of voters are worried that a Labour government might spend too much and get Britain into debt and 40 per cent fear they might put up taxes.

Sir Keir's plan to charge private schools 20 per cent VAT is popular among voters, with only 27 per cent saying it will punish aspirational families and create extra pressure on state schools.

The raid on private school fees is one of a handful of taxes Labour has said it will raise to pay for its spending plans.

But the party has been in a muddle over its plans for council tax, with different shadow ministers making different promises over recent days.

Yesterday Rachel Reeves said Labour was not 'planning to reform council tax' in an interview with Sky News, but did not completely rule it out. The Shadow Chancellor also told the BBC that she was 'not in the business of tinkering with tax rates' and said 'no' when she was asked if she would re-evaluate council tax bands.

But on Tuesday, Sir Keir refused to rule out council tax band revaluation. He said he would not 'write the budgets for the next five years' during a radio phone-in on LBC, but claimed 'none of our plans require a tax rise'.

Yesterday the Mail revealed that a bombshell dossier put forward by an influential group of Labour MPs – including Sir Keir – proposed reforming council tax to make it 'fairer'. The plan by the Tribune group of Opposition MPs was one of six tax raids suggested to raise £60billion.

A party spokesman said the submission was rejected at an early stage in the manifesto process.

THE STATE OF PLAY WITH JUST

■ Council tax bands are currently based on property prices in 1991. Some people have suggested there should be a revaluation to base them on current prices, other people are opposed to this. Do you think...

%	All	HOW PARTIES' 2019 VOTERS FEEL NOW: Con	Lab	Lib Dem
A revaluation would make council tax fairer by basing it on today's property values	30	25	39	36
A revaluation would just be an excuse to charge more in council tax	52	65	44	47
Don't know	19	10	17	17

■ Which of the following, if any, worries you about the idea of a Labour government after the next election? [Tick all that apply]

%	All	HOW PARTIES' 2019 VOTERS FEEL NOW: Con	Lab	Lib Dem
They might spend too much and get Britain into debt	44	73	18	34
They might put my taxes up	40	63	17	28
They might not control immigration	40	70	15	18
Keir Starmer being Prime Minister	37	61	21	17
They might be too 'woke'	36	62	14	20
They might try to reverse Brexit	27	56	5	6
Something else	13	9	14	15
Nothing worries me about the idea of a Labour government	22	4	42	33

REFORM UK

■ Keir Starmer was in Jeremy Corbyn's shadow cabinet and supported him for prime minister. Do you think:

%	All	HOW PARTIES' 2019 VOTERS FEEL NOW: Con	Lab	Lib Dem
It suggests Keir Starmer is really more Left-wing than he now says – which would be a good thing	11	4	23	15
It suggests Keir Starmer is really more Left-wing than he now says – which would be a bad thing	19	40	3	8
It suggests Keir Starmer probably didn't really support Jeremy Corbyn as much as he said he did at the time	34	32	44	46
Don't know	36	24	29	30

Sir Keir in muddle over

By **Claire Ellicott** and **Kumail Jaffer**

SIR Keir Starmer and Rachel Reeves appeared to be at odds over their definition of 'working people' yesterday as they continued to face questions about tax rises.

The Labour leader on Tuesday defined the group as those who do not have the savings to get them through a crisis at home.

Chancellor Jeremy Hunt immediately accused him of letting slip 'Labour's true plans to raise taxes across the board'.

But yesterday, Shadow Chancellor Ms Reeves said the definition of working people included both pensioners and savers. She said Sir Keir had been citing just 'one example'.

Labour's manifesto includes a pledge to 'not increase taxes on working people' but the party had not, until Sir Keir's radio interview, defined what that meant.

While the party has ruled out increasing income tax, National Insurance or VAT if it wins power, it has refused to rule out a number of other tax rises.

During an interview on LBC, Sir Keir was asked what he meant by working people.

'People who earn their living, rely on our [public] services and don't really have the ability to write a cheque when they get into trouble,' he replied.

Asked if Sir Keir meant that anyone with savings was not a working person, Ms Reeves told BBC Radio 4's Today programme: 'No, working people are people who get their income from going out to work every day, and also pensioners who have worked all their lives and are now in retirement, drawing down on their pensions.' Pressed

tax bands, say voters

TWO WEEKS TO GO

■ Looking at those more likely than not to vote for a particular party (those whose highest likelihood of voting for one party was at least 50/100), this implies current vote shares of:

(change since June 12)

Labour	Conservative	Reform UK	Lib Dem	Green
43% (-)	18% (-3)	18% (+3)	9% (+2)	7% (-)

■ Who do you think would make the best Prime Minister?

HOW PARTIES' 2019 VOTERS FEEL NOW

%	All	Con	Lab	Lib Dem
Rishi Sunak	17	39	2	7
Keir Starmer	38	13	72	60
Don't know	45	48	26	32

■ [2019 Conservative voters who say their likelihood of voting Conservative on July 4 is less than 50/100] Which of the following comes closest to your own view?

CURRENT 2024 LIKELY VOTE

%	All	Lab	Lib Dem	Reform UK
If Labour are going to win, I want there to be enough Conservative MPs left to form a strong Opposition and hold the new government to account	40	25	32	39
The Conservatives need a huge defeat so they get the message	41	65	46	45
Don't know	19	10	22	16

'working people'

on whether that included those who had put money aside, she acknowledged that 'many working people do have savings'.

Asked who was excluded from Labour's definition of working people, she cited non-doms and private equity bosses to Sky News.

Sir Keir later backtracked, telling reporters yesterday that working people did have savings.

He insisted: 'I come within my own definition of a working person, which is earning my living, paying my taxes and knowing what it means to save money, and when you do save money, not wanting to use that money to get out of a cost-of-living crisis which is of the Government's making.'

Ms Reeves also faced questions about Labour's plans to raise NHS spending by less than former Tory chancellor George Osborne had during austerity.

Asked by the BBC how she could promise change when the health budget would increase by 1.1 per cent compared with 1.4 per cent under Mr Osborne, Ms Reeves said Labour's manifesto was focusing on growth. She also refused to rule out tax rises on pensions and capital gains, as well as reforms to inheritance tax.

Comment – Page 14

It's not the Tory policies people don't like... it's the Tory party

by Lord Ashcroft

A WOMAN in one of my focus groups last week said that if she had nothing to go on but the leaflets that came through her door, and if these had no party logos, she would probably vote Conservative.

This, in fact, she had no intention of doing – which tells you something about the value of the manifestos that have consumed the interest of the political class over the past week.

Very occasionally, a policy promise will capture the public's imagination or go down so badly that it torpedoes the campaign of whoever proposed it. But, most of the time, policy platforms only serve to amplify whatever people thought of the parties already.

While people often claim to read all the manifestos before making up their minds (if you think politicians tell fibs, you should listen to the voters), in reality they will catch the odd snippet, which they will see through the prism of the views that they already hold.

This is amply demonstrated in my latest poll, where we asked respondents what they thought of various policies – but only told half of them which manifesto they had been taken from.

In nearly every case, the policies were rated more popular (or less unpopular) when people weren't told which party was behind them.

For example, support for a new Help to Buy scheme and scrapping stamp duty for first-time buyers up to £425,000 rises by 15 points when you take the Conservative Party's name off it, and raising the income tax threshold to £20,000 is 23 points higher when people don't know it comes from Reform UK. The effect applies to Labour and the Lib Dems, too. In other words, people's opinions of the policies depend on the parties as much as the other way round.

THIS is especially bad news for the Tories, since it reveals how little they can do to change their fortunes. I found that the average likelihood of those who voted for the Conservatives in 2019 turning out for the party again on July 4 had fallen again since last week, to just 37 out of 100.

Only 7 per cent of Conservative 2019 voters – let alone anyone else – say they are satisfied with the current Government.

Looking at those who say they are more likely than not to vote for a particular party, we find Labour well ahead on 43 per cent and Reform UK drawing level with the Tories on 18 per cent each.

As the day of reckoning approaches, the Tories will be tempted to turn their fire on Labour and Keir Starmer.

Voters will not take the Conservatives' word about anything, let alone the qualities of their opponents, but they already have plenty of doubts about the likely new regime.

Only one in three expects Labour to bring more stability and competence in government, lower NHS waiting times or improve public services.

Fewer than three in ten anticipate more jobs, opportunity and prosperity or more manageable living costs. And fewer than one in six thinks there will be stricter immigration controls or a tougher approach to crime.

Many have worries, including runaway spending, debt and – especially – tax. Rishi Sunak's claim of a £2,000 tax hike under Labour remains the one memorable point from the first televised debate, and few believe that any tax rises will be limited to what has already been declared.

Though Starmer has widened his personal lead over Sunak, still nearly half say they don't know who would do the better job as PM. In my groups, uncertain voters say he seems wishy-washy and vague about his plans.

Some also wonder about the fact that five years ago Starmer campaigned to put Jeremy Corbyn into No 10. Opinion was divided as to whether the Labour leader is more Left-wing than he now claims (which Labour-leaning voters are much more likely to think would be a good thing) or if he didn't support Corbyn as strongly as he said he did at the time.

(Maybe it would help if he talked about his father being a toolmaker. Just a thought.)

BUT these points seem unlikely to make much of a dent. I found that of those saying they would prefer a Labour government, only 37 per cent said they thought Starmer and his party would do a good job governing Britain.

A greater number – 46 per cent – said Labour probably wouldn't do a good job, but they could hardly be worse than what we have now.

The Tories' final appeal to the country is to keep Labour's majority down to reasonable proportions and avoid giving Starmer a blank cheque.

Listening to voters in competitive seats around the country, I find that this resonates with some people, but they are torn. Among 2019 Tories who say they are unlikely to vote for the party this time, four in ten want there to be enough Conservatives left in Parliament to form a strong opposition and hold the government to account.

But fractionally more agree that the Tories 'need a huge defeat so they get the message'.

■ *Lord Ashcroft is an international businessman, author, philanthropist and pollster. His research is at LordAshcroftPolls.com. Follow him on X/Facebook*

Speaking without notes, it seemed Galloway might give us the full Castro (who used to talk for four hours)

WESTMINSTER SKETCH by QUENTIN LETTS

TO Manchester's Gay Village for the manifesto launch of the Workers Party of Great Britain. Few of George Galloway's Lancashire mosque elders ventured into such a decadent part of town. Silly old them. They missed a cracker.

Mr Galloway, the party's supreme leader, made a trenchant, note-free speech of such effortless breadth that it seemed we might be in for a full Fidel (Cuba's late president Castro could talk for four-and-a-half hours). Discussion ranged from military war, which we were told to expect by December if Sir Keir Starmer became PM, to various references to backsides.

We also heard demands for a referendum on the 'Ruritanian' monarchy, with Mr Galloway backing Princess Anne to be the country's first president. Having met the princess, the Oliver Cromwell of Rochdale adjudged that she came up to scratch.

Oh, and Britain needed a public laundry service. This, he noted, was a policy taken from the 1945 manifesto of a certain C.R. Attlee. It doesn't bear thinking how many socks a nationalised launderette might mislay.

We were on the ninth floor of a new hotel. If attendance was slight, it was possibly because a fire alarm had just cleared the building. Blithely arriving 15 minutes late, Mr Galloway called his manifesto 'a very beautiful document'.

It is certainly the only one so far to call for retirement at 60, for the governor of the Bank of England to be a proletariat and for a cull of Royal Navy admirals.

Palestine is Mr Galloway's main thrust, but he had other aces up the sleeve of (dare one say?) his slightly under-laundered looking jacket: no more professional politicians to sit in the House of Lords; a referendum on Net Zero; obliteration of the Arts Council in its current form. Much more of that sort of thing and he could sail into the candidates' book at the Drones Club.

Sunak and Starmer were gutless shrivellers who did not deserve to be PM, he declared, repeating the old line that they were two cheeks on the same bottom.

The only party leader 'saying something with zeal and speaking in human' was Nigel Farage, but Farage was just 'the third cheek' on that gluteus maximus (anatomy not a Galloway strong point) because he was a former City worker who was in bed with Donald Trump. 'If anyone is going to be leader of the opposition to Sir Keir Starmer, then that should be me,' cried Mr Galloway. Lest anyone thought he was joking, he repeated it: 'That should be me!'

Beside him his much younger wife Gayatri closed her eyes and nodded, like someone chewing a goodish custard tart. During one mauve passage a member of the audience shouted an evangelical 'Yes!'

The Workers' Party was 'the spirit of Labour's past' and it possessed 'some of the best parliamentary candidates in the land', averred Mr Galloway, 69, who wore his trilby throughout the event.

A REPEATED theme was that our culture had 'lost its religion'. He did not believe 'the woke armies of the West' could defeat more ruthless forces such as North Korea, China and Russia. He complained that, since Blairism, British patriotism was a dirty word and 'people don't even know if they're men or women'.

He is a not unTrumpian performer: boasts tripping from his tongue amid little shrugs. Media outlets were attacked. The 'deep-state' BBC had been 'working for Keir Starmer for years in everything they do' and he accused Sky News of giving Mr Farage endless publicity.

Was there a hint of demagogue-envy at one point?

Mr Galloway complained that unlike Farage he had not been invited to join 'the Seven Dwarfs' TV debate featuring the likes of Penny Mordaunt, Angela Rayner and the little Greens.

'The Welsh nationalists were in it, with a fellow whose name I can't even pronounce!' Why was the Workers' Party not asked to join that mass debate? 'Because,' smouldered Mr Galloway, 'I'd wipe the floor with them.'

Manifesto launch: George Galloway on stage yesterday

Reform candidate's sickening attack on the royals

They're branded benefits scroungers in online post

By **Michael Blackley**

A CANDIDATE for Nigel Farage's Reform UK party posted a vile anti-monarchy rant that branded the royals 'benefit scroungers' – during the Jubilee celebrations.

Jo Hart put the controversial comments about the late Queen Elizabeth, and other royals, on Facebook in 2022.

They included messages such as 'f*** the royals' and 'make Lizzy the last'.

The post is at odds with Mr Farage, who is a staunch monarchist and has questioned why anyone wouldn't want a constitutional monarchy 'which has served us incredibly well over the last few centuries'.

Reform was last night facing calls to axe Ms Hart but refused to condemn the comments or take any action against her.

She is standing in the Aberdeenshire North and Moray East seat, where Labour had to suspend its candidate for sharing pro-Russian material online.

The constituency is set to have a close battle between the SNP's Seamus Logan and the current Scottish Conservative leader Douglas Ross.

Ms Hart's Facebook post from June 2022, during the four-day bank holiday weekend to mark the Queen becoming the first British monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, claimed millions of people around the UK are struggling to eat, keep warm and keep the lights on.

The rant, which Ms Hart claims was a shared post, said: 'But then the Jubilee comes along, for our "glorious monarch" who has never experienced the kind of hardship having to choose between heating or food, she doesn't have to worry about keeping the lights on or not, in fact, the many MANY millions that have been p****d away on the jubilee celebrations haven't even come from her pocket, but from the public purse.

'Slap in face to us common folk'

'This HUGELY WASTEFUL light show at the palace is nothing but a slap in the face to all of us common folk who are struggling with energy bills right now!'

It concluded: 'So this weekend when you're cracking out the bunting and celebrating the jubilee, just use that massively washed brain of yours and think instead, at just how much of a p*** take this all really is.

'All the while I hear people banging on about people on benefits scrounging... THE SINGLE BIGGEST BENEFITS SCROUNGERS ARE THE MONARCHY IT'S TIME IT WAS SCRAPPED! F*** THE ROYALS! #makelizzythelast.'

The comments are embarrassing for Mr Farage, who last year questioned why rising numbers of people oppose the monarchy.

He said: 'Why would so many young people not think having a monarch was a benefit to this country, would not think having a constitutional monarchy – which I think has served us incredibly well over the last few centuries – why would they not want that to be there?'

Following the Queen's death in 2022, Mr Farage described her as 'the most respected human being in the world'.

A Scottish Conservative spokesman said: 'This disgusting attack on the late Queen Elizabeth must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

'Reform must suspend this candidate for holding such vile anti-monarchy, anti-Britain views.'

The row is the latest in a series of controversies about Reform UK candidates.

In response to the social media comments, a Reform UK spokesman said the party's candidates were 'not party-political zombies' and 'have views of their own and are as free to express them as anyone else, even if they are not shared by all their party colleagues'.

When asked if his party would condemn the comments Ms Hart shared, David Kirkwood, deputy chairman of Reform UK Scotland, said: 'We are not going to comment.'

Speaking at her Highland home last night, Ms Hart said: 'We all have a right to make a comment. It wasn't actually my comment, it was a share.'

Controversy: Jo Hart's Facebook post criticised the late Queen

POLL BRIEFING

SNP's doubts on Scotland going it alone

By **Claire Ellicott**
Whitehall Editor

THERE is no guarantee an independent Scotland would succeed, the leader of the SNP admitted yesterday.

Launching his party's manifesto, John Swinney conceded the country would face challenges but said there were grounds for 'optimism'.

Polls show his party is on course to lose more than half of the 48 seats it won in 2019, with Labour set to have the most MPs north of the border. 'Of course, an independent Scotland, like all countries, would face challenges. Success would not be guaranteed,' he said.

'That would be determined by our own decisions as a country... But when we look at independent European countries similar to Scotland there are grounds for optimism and hope.'

The First Minister also claimed the SNP would have the democratic right to open 'immediate negotiations' for another independence referendum if it wins a majority of Scotland's 57 seats. He said achieving a benchmark of 29 seats would 'intensify the pressure to secure Scottish independence'.

The SNP manifesto launch was a much smaller event than in previous elections, with the party struggling to raise funds while it is under the shadow of a police investigation into its finances.

Lord Frost: Starmer will betray Brexit

By **David Churchill**
Chief Political Correspondent

BORIS Johnson's Brexit negotiator has warned a Labour government would drag Britain back into the 'orbit' of Brussels by diluting the UK-EU trade deal.

Lord Frost said Sir Keir Starmer would betray the Leave vote in 2016 by making Britain subject to EU laws and judges.

Sir Keir has described the deal struck by Mr Johnson and Lord Frost as 'botched' and insisted he would strike a 'better' one. But Lord Frost warned this could mean Britain giving up sovereignty and being a rule taker.

'If the EU gives you something it wants something back,' he said, adding: 'We do have to face this prospect that Labour are going to water down the deal we got.

'There's no doubt they're going to try and get us closer into the single market even if there won't be the stroke of a pen that does the whole thing. And we're going to be back in the orbit of the EU.'

Speaking to the Sun's Never Mind The Ballots show, he said if Labour wants deeper ties with Brussels, 'then they're going to have to accept the EU laws and courts to get it'.

Labour hopeful is axed over 'pro-Russia' article

By **Kumail Jaffer**
Political Correspondent

LABOUR has suspended a candidate in a key seat in Scotland after reports emerged he shared material questioning Russia's role in the Salisbury poisoning and downplayed anti-Semitism in the party.

Andy Brown, who is standing in Aberdeenshire North and Moray East, reportedly posted an article on social media suggesting the 'toxin' used to incapacitate former double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter, and kill Dawn Sturgess, was 'never produced in Russia, but was in service in the US, UK, and other Nato states'.

The source for the 2018 article, Russia Today, was banned by regulator Ofcom in 2022. Sir Keir Starmer said Labour 'acted straight away' when the material was presented to the party.

Mr Brown insisted he would never endorse such views, and said his Facebook account may have been hacked.

The seat was tightly contested by Scottish Tory leader Douglas Ross and the SNP in 2019, but Labour has turned it into a three-horse race, according to pollsters. The suspension after the June 7 candidate deadline means Mr Brown will remain on the ballot, but won't be endorsed by the party any further. If he is elected, he will sit as an independent MP.

Green contender admits sex assault

THE Green Party suspended an election candidate yesterday after the Mail discovered he had confessed to a sexual assault.

Chris Brody admitted in a now-deleted blog post about his 'bipolar condition' that he had once 'dragged' a woman 'down the street by the arm' and had also 'resisted arrest'.

Mr Brody, who is standing against ex-Tory leader Iain Duncan Smith seat in Chingford and Woodford Green, said he had been 'sectioned under the Mental Health Act several times'.

The Green Party suspended Mr Brody after the Mail alerted it to the posts from March 31.

In the blog, headlined 'It's a mad (mad, mad, mad) world', Mr Brody said the sexual assault happened 'in a "secure" ward that was lacking proper supervision'.

A party spokesman said: 'He will receive no further support, other than pastoral support, from the party.'

CHILLING MARCH OF THE

Fears North Korean troops could be sent to fight in Ukraine

By **Mark Nicol**
Diplomacy Editor

TROOPS from North Korea could join the invasion of Ukraine under a new pact with Russia, experts warned last night.

The chilling prospect of waves of Kim Jong Un's military flooding into the battered nation emerged after the dictator signed a defence agreement with Vladimir Putin in Pyongyang yesterday.

The Russian president was on a two-day state visit to North Korea, where he was greeted enthusiastically by tens of thousands of well-wishers.

During events yesterday, the two despots embraced and – according to North Korea state media – shared 'pent-up innermost thoughts' as they were driven to the Kumsusan state guest house.

Footage of Putin's welcome ceremony in Pyongyang showed an honour guard and a crowd of civilians gathered in the Kim Il Sung Square by the Taedong River.

Children waved balloons in celebration and the square was adorned with huge portraits of the two leaders and their national flags. Streets of the city were lined with images of Putin, and the facade of the unfinished Ryugyong Hotel was emblazoned with the message: 'Welcome Putin'.

Analysts agree that the arrival of thousands of Kim's soldiers on Russia's front line would be a game-changer in the conflict, significantly strengthening the Kremlin's hand. North Korea is also expected to supply Russia with a further five million ammunition rounds – having already supplied as much in recent months.

Last night, former British Army intelligence expert Philip Ingram said: 'I do think North Korea probably will supply troops as part of the new defence pact. This is very worrying. They will add numbers but how adaptable they will prove on the battlefield remains to be seen.

'Russia's tactics have been so primitive, sacrificing vast numbers of soldiers in the so-called "meat grinder". The Kremlin is probably more interested in quantity of personnel rather than quality.'

Meanwhile, ex-British Army commander Colonel Hamish de Bretton-Gordon suggested Kim could exchange soldiers for nuclear technology.

He said: 'It would show how absolutely desperate they both are; Putin for troops and Kim for

Flags at the ready, children! North Korean youngsters line up in the pristine Kim Il Sung Square, Pyongyang, yesterday

They take turns driving Putin gift, Kremlin's fake Rolls-Royce

AS A parting gift yesterday, Vladimir Putin gave his North Korean counterpart another luxury car. The dictators then took the Russian-made Aurus Senat limousine for a spin around Pyongyang, sharing the driving duties.

Aurus was set up at Putin's behest in 2018 so he would not have to use Western vehicles.

He first gave a car to Kim Jong Un in February this year.

By **Diplomacy Editor**

The model they were seen driving yesterday bore a striking resemblance to a Rolls-Royce.

Aurus describes the Senat as 'Russia's first luxury car'. It has a 4.4-litre twin-turbo V8 engine, producing 590bhp.

The motors are rarely seen outside Russia due to Western sanctions and restrictions on Putin's movements following the invasion of Ukraine.

According to reports, Aurus sales have been slow, with just 31 sold in Russia in 2022.

The figure would suggest Russian oligarchs do not share Putin's aversion to Western luxury cars, which remain hugely popular in Moscow.

Despite sanctions, Kim has amassed a collection of luxury foreign vehicles.

Front-seat drivers: Vladimir Putin with Kim Jong Un at the wheel yesterday

TYRANTS

to greet Kim Jong Un with his guest and ally Vladimir Putin

knowledge.' North Korea's People's Army is believed to consist of up to 1.3million active personnel. The majority are engaged in the country's historic stand-off with South Korea.

After suffering some 500,000 casualties in Ukraine, Russia needs to bolster its front-line forces. The arrival of North Korean troops would further reduce Ukraine's chances of reclaiming its eastern provinces of Luhansk and Donetsk, which

'This is very worrying'

have been held by Russia since early 2022.

Putin and Kim's pact includes a joint obligation to intervene on each other's part in any conflict. This could see Russia supporting North Korea against South Korea. With no formal text being made public, however, its implications remain open to interpretation. Kim told reporters the country would respond 'without hesitation' to threats facing North Korea or Russia.

Kim added that the new treaty would help create a 'new multi-polar world' and described his nation's support for Russia as 'unconditional'. Putin said the countries would provide 'mutual help' in the event of 'aggression' towards one another.

North Korea is already heavily sanctioned by the West over its attempts to develop nuclear weapons, so it has little to lose by supporting Russia's invasion.

Last night, Putin flew to Vietnam, a Communist-ruled country, where he is scheduled to meet leaders today.

■ OUTGOING Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte is expected to become Nato's next secretary general after Hungary withdrew its objection to his selection.

Nato agreed to a request by Hungary's prime minister Viktor Orban for Hungary to be excluded from a Ukrainian support package – an agreement which Rutte has agreed to honour if selected.

Comment – Page 14

This visit marks a line in the sand. A new axis of pariah states is emerging

COMMENTARY By Mark Galeotti

IT WAS a welcome fit for a Tsar. Thousands of North Koreans cheering fanatically as Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un greeted Russia's President Vladimir Putin for his first visit to the hermit kingdom in 24 years.

An army of young children lined the red carpet in Pyongyang, waving Russian flags and beaming obligingly from ear to ear.

Others held aloft large portraits of the two dictators as the pair rolled past, waving from the sunroof of a blacked-out Mercedes.

We have become used to these farcical displays of idolatry inside North Korea.

But Putin's landmark visit to the authoritarian state this week marks a sinister shift in strategy for the Kremlin.

So what exactly do Putin and Kim really want from one another, and how does it affect our ever-more fragile peace?

A decade ago, Russia was a member of the G8 (now G7) alliance of major political nations. Putin had a seat at the top table of global diplomacy.

He courted Western alliances, allowing US military jets to use Russian airspace and even once suggesting that Russia might be open to joining Nato.

But all that has changed now. The moment Putin's war machine rolled into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, he knew full well the old alliances – to say nothing of uneasy friendships – were shattered.

OVER the past two years, Russia has become isolated to an extent not seen since the darkest days of the Cold War.

Putin needs new friends.

In the post-Soviet era, Russia has previously sought to keep North Korea at arm's length: friendly, but never over-familiar.

Now, however, Putin is on diplomatic manoeuvres as he seeks to build an axis of anti-Western pariah states around the world.

He has no choice.

Russia is in desperate need of munitions to continue waging its barbaric conflict in Ukraine.

Indeed, it appears as though North Korea has recently approved the delivery of a further five million artillery rounds to the Russian war machine, taking the total number of shells it has provided to around ten million.

In the short-term, for Ukrainians this means the relentless barrage is set to continue. Premonitions of peace talks aired last week at the Ukraine Peace Summit were, to my mind, premature.

In exchange, Russia is providing North Korea with millions of barrels of oil. Due to sanctions imposed by the West, Russia needs a market for its vast reserves of black gold – and Kim is a ready buyer.

But it's not just oil. North Korea also needs food to feed its invariably hungry population.

Outside of major cities, millions of North Koreans live in abject food poverty and Kim, the obese leader, knows that an army marches on its stomach.

If North Korea is preparing for war – indeed, technically it remains in a state of conflict against its southern neighbour – it needs to feed its people first.

Russia suffered a relatively poor harvest this year due to inclement weather and a shortage of labourers, with many drafted to the front line.

But that hasn't stopped Putin sending grain to North Korea by the boatload.

The question is: where does this new-found friendship go next?

The US is particularly concerned that Russia will begin sharing nuclear-missile technology with North Korea.

In 2003, former leader Kim Jong Il – known as The General – withdrew from the global nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Since then, his bellicose son has rapidly expanded its nuclear arsenal.

The state is now believed to possess a stockpile of some 40 to 50 nuclear warheads along with the raw materials needed to double this apocalyptic hoard.

However, what it lacks is the long-range ballistic technology required to launch and carry these warheads.

In September last year, Putin welcomed Kim to Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome spaceport in the far east of the country.

The spaceport is typically used to launch satellites, but the technology needed to do so is very similar to that required to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles equipped with nuclear warheads.

At the time, Putin wisecracked to the assembled reporters: 'The leader of the DPRK (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) shows great interest in rocket engineering.'

I am, however, sceptical that Putin really wants to share nuclear know-how with Kim. For all the pomp and ceremony of this month's visit, Russia still does not fully trust North Korea.

A more likely point of collaboration between the two concerns cyber-warfare – the latest and more profitable front in the battle against the US and Europe.

North Korea runs a highly sophisticated cyber unit which has been implicated in frauds worth $3 billion between 2017 and 2023.

The possibility of co-operation in cyber-hacking represents a fearsome new threat to global banking, international security and personal data.

And then there is the potential for trade in people.

In February this year, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky estimated that more than 180,000 Russian soldiers had been killed in Ukraine, with around 300,000 more believed to have been injured.

THE result is that Russia faces a crippling shortage of workers to man its munitions factories, bring home the harvest and maintain public services.

North Korea, on the other hand, has a surplus of impoverished, hard-working people. It wouldn't surprise me if we see thousands of North Koreans labouring in Russian munitions factories by the end of the year.

Whatever the case, Putin's historic visit to North Korea this week marks a line in the sand.

A new axis of pariah states is emerging – with Russia, North Korea, Iran and China at its heart.

But it's not just these four geopolitical heavyweights. Putin is hoping to lead a tribe of outcasts which also includes the likes of Venezuela, Zimbabwe and Iraq.

The world is becoming ever more unstable. The risk of another global conflict is increasing.

But there remains one great truism of war: before you pick your enemy, you choose your friends. And in this regard, Putin has made his ugly choice.

■ *Mark Galeotti is honorary professor at the University College London School of Slavonic and East European Studies and his latest book is Putin's Wars: From Chechnya To Ukraine.*

Daily Mail
COMMENT

Proof PM should be trusted on economy

IT'S no surprise the number one issue brought up on the doorstep by voters this election is the cost of living.

If anything is guaranteed to make people poorer it is inflation. Their salaries and pensions are eaten away by rising food, energy and petrol prices.

But Rishi Sunak promised to crack this pernicious problem. And true to his word, he's succeeded. The Consumer Prices Index has fallen to the Bank of England's 2 per cent target for the first time since July 2021.

Given that inflation was an eye-watering 11.1 per cent when he became Prime Minister, this is no mean feat.

Of course, prices are still considerably higher than three years ago. But the reality is inflation rocketed across the world as a result of the pandemic and then the war in Ukraine.

Critics of the Government were quick to blame ministers, which was deeply unfair. Now those same sneering opponents give them no credit for bringing it back down.

Yet Mr Sunak played his part by resisting ludicrous union pay demands and keeping a lid on public spending.

The Bank may fear being seen to act politically during an election, but it should ignore convention and cut interest rates.

This would be a boost for mortgage-holders, businesses and the wider economy.

The tragedy for Mr Sunak is that by gambling on an early election, which he is hot favourite to lose, Labour reaps the rewards when borrowing costs eventually tumble.

Sir Keir's class war

LABOUR'S evasiveness over who it considers to be 'working people' exposes the dishonesty underpinning its tax agenda.

Its manifesto committed to not raise taxes on workers. But we are in the dark as to how exactly the party defines this group.

Sir Keir Starmer says it does not include those with enough savings to cover household emergencies. To Wes Streeting, it's not anyone earning over £50,000. Rachel Reeves – likely to be chancellor in 15 days – seems unable to clear up the confusion.

What we do know is that if Labour wins power, this opens the door to unexpected tax rises for millions of families and pensioners to fund a reckless spending splurge.

Being dismissed as a 'non-worker' is a slap in the face to anyone who wants to get on in life – or who has aspiration for their children.

Saving was once regarded as a virtue – enabling people to live within their means, put aside money for a rainy day and invest for their future. To Labour, it seems, thrift is just a target for exploitation.

All our public services rely on workers having ambition. If they are diligent, they move through the salary ranks, making a bigger contribution to the Exchequer.

You might have thought the divisive 'up the workers, down with the bosses' mentality went out with the 1970s. This class war nonsense shows it is still alive and well in Labour's resentful neo-socialist ranks.

Axis of Evil reborn

NOTHING symbolises Russia's isolation on the world stage more strikingly than Vladimir Putin's state visit to North Korea.

In exchange for missiles, artillery shells and possibly troops to help fight his brutal war, Putin will supply the pariah state with oil, grain and maybe even nuclear technology.

This new pact is perilous for Britain and our allies as a new axis of autocratic countries, including Iran and China, gains strength.

Tyrants want to overthrow the liberal order, which is why we and Nato must spend much more on defence. We cannot even hint that the West might wave the white flag.

Keir Starmer is engaged in a gigantic deception against voters, so why won't Rishi take the fight to the Labour leader?

WHAT'S HE GOT TO LOSE!

by Stephen Glover

HOW tough is Rishi Sunak? Tough enough to resign as Chancellor in July 2022, and bring about the demise of his patron, Boris Johnson.

Yet during this campaign Mr Sunak hasn't been tough. He has been resilient and industrious but has failed, like his party, to grip the main issue of the election: Sir Keir Starmer.

When the PM set the process in motion four weeks ago, I had my doubts about timing. Wouldn't it have been preferable to wait until the autumn, when the economy will be stronger? Nonetheless, I welcomed the prospect of Mr Sunak going head to head with the Labour leader, and illuminating his astonishing inconsistencies.

Furtive

He hasn't done so. Sir Keir may have been exposed as a furtive tax-raiser who is planning to whack the better-off — and very possibly not-so-well-off — with higher capital gains tax and property taxes.

But that's only part of it. The bigger picture is Sir Keir himself. No major political leader in modern times has changed his mind so often in so short a period. He is a weather vane of a politician, veering from hard-Left to soft-Left to hard-Left and back to soft-Left again. Rishi has shown little interest in these amazing gyrations.

People may forgive Sir Keir for his Trotskyist views in his 20s when, by his own recollection, he was a republican. If we were all to be hung for things we said and did as young adults, there would be gibbets all over the land.

As he became a successful barrister, Starmer edged Rightwards, and by the time he became Director of Public Prosecutions in 2008 has moved to the soft-Left. That is how he was billed when elected an MP in 2015.

Yet he cheerfully joined the shadow cabinet of the new hard-Left leader, Jeremy Corbyn, though moderate Labour MPs such as Yvette Cooper, Liz Kendall and Rachel Reeves declined to do so. When Corbyn was challenged for the leadership in 2016, Starmer disowned him — only to rejoin the shadow cabinet after the grizzled old booby had seen off the attempted putsch.

For the next three years Starmer was a loyal Corbynite. He didn't oppose the rising tide of anti-Semitism. Nor did he question the higher taxes proposed in the party's 2017 and 2019 manifestos. He was a fellow traveller of the hard-Left. He even described Corbyn as his 'friend', an encomium seldom uttered by one politician about another.

In one area — Brexit — he went further than his leader, and championed a second referendum, which was an attempt to repudiate the largest democratic vote in our history.

Why doesn't Rishi challenge him on this vast intended betrayal when they meet tonight in a debate with other leaders, and next Wednesday when the two of them will be alone? I hope the PM hasn't been advised never to mention Brexit.

In 2019, as we know, Labour went down to its most abject defeat since 1935. Now Sir Keir seeks to distance himself from this debacle by saying he knew that the party would lose. Why, then, did he campaign so enthusiastically for a Labour victory?

I don't believe him. I think he's trying to find an excuse for having supported Jeremy Corbyn. It's a dishonourable ploy. He claims to have had no faith in the policies he once advocated. What kind of man admits that?

The duplicities continued. When he stood for the leadership of the Labour Party in 2020, Starmer did so on a platform that was virtually Corbynite, advocating the scrapping of student tuition fees and the 'common ownership' of most privatised industries.

Once elected, the new Labour leader embarked on yet another change of political course, ditching most of his commitments, and trying to make himself attractive to disenchanted Tories. Perhaps the culmination of this insincere love dance was a newspaper article last December in which he affected to admire Margaret Thatcher.

Here's a question — and one that Rishi and the Tories should be asking if they had any gumption: why should voters have any confidence in Labour's 2024 manifesto given that Sir Keir has torn up the manifesto on which he was elected leader of his party only four years ago?

The man is a serial chameleon. No, that is a slur on chameleons. What does he really believe? Does he believe in anything other than the acquisition of power by any means?

Trust

The economist John Maynard Keynes famously said: 'When the facts change, I change my mind. What do you do, sir?' Of course we all change our minds, and may not even be entirely sure what we think about some things. But Sir Keir Starmer's mind-boggling inconsistencies are of a different order.

If he were 25, one might forgive him for chopping and changing so much. But he's 61. In his 50s he zigzagged around the political track in both directions. A man should have settled beliefs at such an age if he is to command trust and respect.

Except, it seems, if he wants to be the next Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Is it possible that voters hate the Conservative Party so much that they don't care whom they choose to replace it? They resemble householders who want to get rid of a rogue builder who has overcharged and botched the job. It doesn't occur to them that the chap who turns up at the front door with a sledgehammer in his hand might be far worse.

And yet there are clues that some people entertain doubts about Sir Keir. His personal ratings, though far better than Mr Sunak's, are not as stellar as they should be, in view of his party's huge lead in the polls. One recent YouGov survey suggested that one in three hold a favourable view of the Labour leader but around half still have a negative opinion.

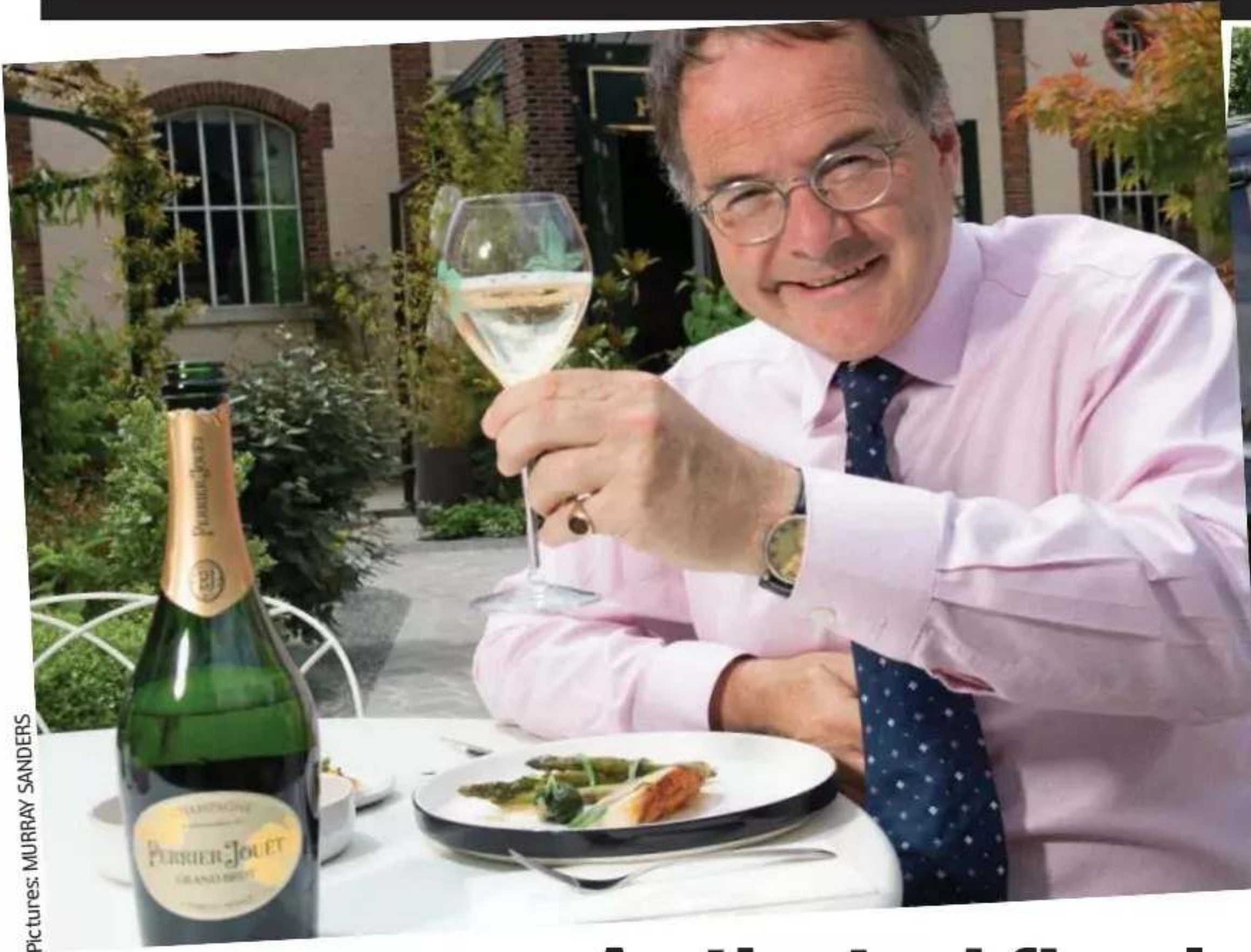
Jugular

There are hints elsewhere of misgivings. At last week's leadership debate in Grimsby, the audience tittered after a questioner said that Sir Keir 'was more like a political robot'. On Nick Ferrari's LBC show on Tuesday, there were several sceptical listeners. Unsurprisingly, they were met with the usual wall of Starmer waffle.

Why won't Rishi and other Tories take the fight to the Labour leader, and dwell on his hard-Left past, his opportunism and his lack of enduring principle? You'd think that such weaknesses were a gift to them, but they won't take it.

Mr Sunak was prepared to plunge the knife in Boris's back and yet is reluctant to go for his opponent's jugular. Surely, if you crave the top job, you must be able to show political aggression. Sir Keir Starmer is engaged in a gigantic deception against the British public — and the Tories are letting him get away with it.

What has Rishi to lose? As things stand, he's likely to go down as the prime minister responsible for the worst Tory defeat in history. It may not be too late if he fights. At worst he will be defeated with honour.

The evasive, opaque, endlessly politically mutating Sir Keir Starmer is the biggest issue of this election. Let's address it at last.

Pictures: MURRAY SANDERS

Oh la la: Quentin raises a glass at Perrier-Jouet and, above, in an Uber

As the taxi firm launches a lavish day trip to the French winelands, QUENTIN LETTS takes the chance to escape the election with a glass (or three) of the finest fizz

My heavenly day on Uber's new tour of a Champagne paradise

PARADISE has, over the years, had many depictions. Renaissance painters such as Tintoretto and Botticini imagined angels and bearded hunks perching on clouds. Flemish master Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568-1625) envisaged a forest glade with tame animals.

The Plains Of Heaven, by 19th-century English painter John Martin, shows an unspoilt plateau whose mountain lake is fed by a blue waterfall.

Four centuries earlier, Dutch oddball Hieronymus Bosch saw heaven as a tunnel rising to a source of light, like some vast concrete culvert in the sky.

In France the other day, I stumbled on another vision of Eden. After breakfast we had escaped the grime of Paris — a sorry place these days — and driven east for more than an hour.

The undulating countryside with its industrially farmed fields was pleasant enough on an overcast morning, yet it hardly made the soul sing.

We left the A4 autoroute and followed a 'route touristique du champagne'.

This made sense because I was trying Uber Bubbles, a new day trip in which an Uber car collects you from the French capital and whirrs you off to the Champagne-growing region for degustations and an excellent lunch.

AT THE late 18th-century Maison Belle Epoque, Epernay, we were greeted by a glass of Perrier-Jouet Blason Rosé and the lightest, scrummiest cheese biscuits before a five-course lunch with further sluicings of brut and blanc de blancs.

In Reims we were given a tour of the astonishing G.H. Mumm cellars and then, in case we were still thirsty, a squirt of Mumm's Cordon Rouge fizz.

But first let me describe my vision of paradise. At this point in the day, by the way, I was completely sober. Scout's honour. After leaving the autoroute, our chauffeur Pascal swung the Tesla towards the village of Oeuilly.

It took us past a village church that had seen better days, its roof patched with corrugated iron.

Given the earlier, sad state of Paris, whose streets were full of camping refugees and whose tabacs reeked of skunk cannabis, I thought, 'Poor France is really struggling'.

At that point we crested a rise and everything changed. Before us, as if laid on a tablecloth, sat the Marne Valley, broad, fertile and shafted by sunlight.

The spectacle could have been from a Disney film. The bucolic order, the sheer, fecund perfection of that wide and gentle landscape made one gasp.

The Marne Valley has the soft contours, almost, of the classic Champagne coupe or saucer glass, being broad enough to nestle in the palm of a hand. Welcome to the magic kingdom of bubbles.

What one noticed, standing there on the horizon, like Cortez gawping at the Pacific, was that the entire hillside seemed to be covered with vineyards.

Thousands upon thousands of rows of vines dotted every inch of that majestic valley.

They were as neat as the stitches left by an electric sewing machine. Patches showed where new vines had been planted to replace older stock, but the uniformity of drill and furrow was remarkable.

If this was paradise, it was one made by man at his most attentive. And yet, during World War I, the Marne Valley was a terrible killing ground, a place where man-made chaos ravaged the hillsides.

West of Epernay we passed a Great War cemetery; those regimented graves somehow echoed the precision of the fields of chardonnay, pinot noir and meunier vines — those being the three main varieties of grape that go into Champagne.

Janisson-Baradon, Patrick Boivin, Leclerc Briant, Locret Lachaud: as we entered pretty Epernay, every street offered a new Champagne house. They were testament to the perfect climate and soil conditions for grape-growing in this part of the world.

The fields sit on sedimentary rock composed of chalk, marl and limestone, fast-draining yet able to retain enough water to sustain vines through dry spells.

The place in the world with the nearest conditions to Champagne is the south-east of England where, sure enough, sparkling wine is becoming a big industry, particularly since climate change made the Sussex and Kent weather more like that of the Champagne region.

But Uber Bubbles is not a geography field trip. It is about drink and food and pleasure in a world too often soured by political gripes.

'Bienvenue à Perrier-Jouet,' said Yannick Bouvet, manager of the Maison Belle Epoque, as he led us to a courtyard table dappled by June sunshine.

MONSIEUR Bouvet, 27, removed the cork from a bottle of Champagne with the effortless ease of a man who must open hundreds a week.

This 2015 Belle Epoque Champagne was decorated with Perrier-Jouet's historic Japanese anemone motif, and he proceeded to talk us through the characters of some of his wines: the 'light, refreshing brut, becoming spicier as it opens', the 'fruity and full rosé, whose 15 per cent of red grapes gives it a strong finish', and the 'peachy, flowery, white fruits' of the blanc de blancs.

Could I tell the difference? Hic, of coursh!

Lunch was served: crab tartelette, marinated salmon with cucumber and almond cream, chicken fillet with Champagne sauce, then spring pavlova.

Oh, and a mignardise of financier pastry, so named because it was said to resemble a tiny bar of gold, though being markedly lighter.

Must have cost a fortune, you say. The Uber Bubbles day costs 200 euros (about £170) per car. You can fit four into the Tesla, so that would work out at just over £40 a head.

With Paris facing a bumper summer of tourism during the Olympic Games, Uber could be rushed off its wheels.

Taking our leave of the charming Yannick — or maybe two of him, given the amount of Perrier-Jouet

TURN TO NEXT PAGE

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

I had by now hosed back — we made the short journey to Reims and the headquarters of Mumm, which Pascal told me I must not pronounce 'Mum' but 'Moom' to rhyme with 'room'.

The enormity of the factory attested to what an important industry Champagne is.

In 2022, France exported more than 325 million bottles of Champagne — almost a tenth of them to Britain.

Mumm's cellars, built mainly in the 19th century, run to more than 15 miles of cool, low-lit tunnels.

Without a guide you could become horribly lost and possibly disappear for ever, but it might be a light-headed demise: at every turn there are magnums and jeroboams of Mumm champagne standing upside down in wooden pupitres, or riddling racks.

Riddling is the term used to describe the loosening of yeast sediment.

With the bottles not quite vertical, and being regularly turned, the yeast sinks towards the cork, where it can be removed.

Most normal Champagne bottles are now riddled by machine but the bigger, more valuable bottles are still turned by hand.

Before we returned to the surface, we were shown a bottle of Mumm Cordon Rouge Stellar, designed to be drunk by astronauts. Without gravity, the usual bubbles reportedly acquire a mind of their own and have to be chased through the air.

I already felt I had been doing some of that at Perrier-Jouet.

The bubbles in this bottle are larger and more stable, however, so can be enjoyed in space. One hesitates to think what the galactic constabulary would make of an astronaut drinking at the wheel of his or her rocket, but knocking back a glass of Champagne while looking down at the distant Earth sounds a wonderful experience.

Fizz on the final frontier. It's another concept, perhaps, of paradise.

■ *UBER Bubbles will run on Fridays and Saturdays until August 17. For more information go to uber.com/newsroom/bubbles*

Craig Brown

Your candidate for Cardigan is... Mr D Beckham

ELECTION CONSTITUENCY GUIDE, PART 1

ARCHWAY
Cumming, A
French, D
Winkleman, C
Worsley, L

BAKEWELL
Dell'Anno, G
Hussain, N
Pereira, C
Sawkins, P

BARKING
Bully, XL
Icke, D
Hare, MM
Truss, L

BATH
Bogeyman, F
Gallagher, L
Patterson, Sir L
Rasputin, G

BLANDFORD
Barlow, G
Bruce, K
Edinburgh, S
Willoughby, H

BOOKHAM
Arnott, DS
Carmichael, DCS
Davidson, DCI
Fleming, DI
Hastings, Supt

BOREHAM
Curtice, Sir J
Peake, T
Starmer, Sir K
Streeting, W
Toynbee, P

BOW
Charlotte, Princess
Mouse, Ms M
Peep, B
Temple, S

BOX HILL
Ali, M
Cooper, H
Fury, T
Jones, G
Joshua, A
Prescott, J
Smith, W
Tyson, M

BRAINTREE
Calculus, Prof
Copernicus, N
Einstein, A
Galilei, G
Newton, Sir I

BRAY
McIntyre, M
Nice-But-Dim, T
Rees-Mogg, Sir J
York, S

THE BROADS
Censori, B
Hendricks, C
Kardashian, K
Mansfield, J
Price, K
West, M

BUCKS
Bezos, J
Midas, K
Murdoch, R
Musk, E

BURLEY
Anderson, L
Clarke, K
Coffey, T
Holmes, E
Trump, D
Wallace, B

CARDIGAN
Beckham, D
Como, P
Doonican, V

Picture: EMPICS

CHATHAM
Carr, A
Frost, D
Norton, G
Parkinson, M
Ross, J

CHESHIRE
Blair, T
Branson, Sir R
Bruce, F
Davey, Sir E
Farage, N
Holden, A
Joker, T
Minogue, K

CHIPPENHAM
Allen, K
Lennon, J
Sussex, H
Vicious, S

COOKHAM
Beeton, Mrs
Fearnley-Whittingstall, H
Lawson, N
Leith, P
Oliver, J
Slater, N

CRAWLEY
Gromit
Heep, U
Iago
Scobie, O
Smithers, W

DISS
Sugar, A
Cowell, S
Lythgoe, N
Revel Horwood, C

EFFINGHAM
Campbell, A
Margolyes, M
Ramsay, G
Rotten, J
Tucker, M

FAKENHAM
Bankman-Fried, S
Kujau, K
Van Meegeren, H

FAWLER
Biden, J
Campbell, N
Kinnock, N
Madonna

FLEET
Bannister, R
Bolt, U
Gonzalez, S
Whizz, B

FOREST OF DEAN
Acheson, D
Gaffney, D
Martin, D

GIGGLESWICK
Carr, J
Gnome, L
Pig, P

GORING
Barnett, E
Ferrari, N
Humphrys, J
Neil, A
Rigby, B
Robinson, N

GRAVESEND
Banquo
Dracula, Count
Marley, J
Yorick, AP

GREAT HAM
Blessed, B
Cage, N
Clarkson, J
Olivier, L
Piggy, Miss

GRIMSBY
Corbyn, J
Herzog, W
Lecter, Dr H
Morrissey, S

GUERNSEY
Dawson, L
Murray, Sir A
Wallace, G
Williams, K

By **Peter Hitchens**

What's happening in Gaza is wrong and stupid. But did protesters really have to despoil a tranquil corner of Oxford to make their voices heard?

Mess: The former protest site outside the Oxford museum

Picture: DAMIEN McFADDEN

THE modern world has lots of ways of showing that you care, with maximum publicity. If you want to build a catwalk for your conscience to strut along, the cameras will quickly arrive to film you.

Almost none of these routes to public admiration, or to self-admiration, involve hard work, true sacrifice or real consideration for others. Rather the contrary.

The more that such people shout about their righteousness, the more I suspect that at home there is an unmade bed in a room like a landfill site and despairing housemates exasperated by the piles of unwashed plates and empty beer cans.

And I think there is proof of this in the nasty, slatternly mess that Gaza protesters have left behind them in Oxford this week.

Apparently they say they plan to transform it into a community garden, but someone needs to tell them that splintered timber, old bits of board, discarded tents and fading placards will never be any kind of garden.

Far from being green-fingered, these future leaders of our society have shown a great skill in turning smooth lawn into lumpy baked clay, bald patches and mini deserts of woodchip.

Does it not occur to them that their fellow citizens actually liked and enjoyed the place which they have so carelessly defiled? Or that, in a world increasingly made up of concrete ugliness and mess, an ordered place of tranquillity and beauty is precious?

Has Gaza so exhausted their caring powers that they couldn't find the energy to tidy up when they had finished?

Is an exhibition of selfishness, pallets, planks, dumped tents, gouged and bald grass where a pleasing lawn once lay any sign of goodness?

This sort of thing is a major feature of our world. Give publicly to a famous charity. Glue yourself to the road to save the planet and who cares if poor people cannot get to work?

Wear a Left-wing T-shirt. Fly a Ukrainian and/or rainbow flag from your window. Or you can demonstrate against something that everyone thinks is bad (far easier than protesting against things everyone thinks are good, as I can attest).

LONG ago, the satirist of genius, Tom Lehrer, lampooned such people in The Folk Song Army which begins: 'We are the Folk Song Army. Every one of us cares. We all hate poverty, war and injustice. Unlike the rest of you squares.'

Even longer ago, the poet William Blake, who was no Tory, warned: 'He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars: general good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite, and flatterer.'

But neither Lehrer nor Blake seem to have made much impact on this latest generation of protesters. I suspect they are largely unknown.

For instance, compare and contrast the noisy, self-proclaimed nobility of the Gaza protesters in Oxford with the nasty, scruffy mess they have left at one of the places they first squatted on and have now quietly deserted.

Back in the spring, their consciences were so stricken by events in Gaza that they absolutely had to pitch their little tents all over a serene, newly turfed lawn outside the Oxford University Museum of Natural History.

I pass it twice a day on my way to and from Oxford station on my bicycle. I recall the morning when I rejoiced to see the grass finally reappearing after years when the whole zone had been enclosed by a building site.

At last, one of the finest Victorian buildings in England was once again in its proper setting. Then the protesters appeared, uninterested in the soft, moist newness of the turf, which squelched and turned to mud beneath their self-righteous feet.

There, in many cases wearing silly masks, they proclaimed their opposition to the killing of civilians, as if nobody else had ever felt that way. And there they published their so-called demands, directed at the Government and the university.

When they think about it, they must know that they have no more power over the authorities than a bedbug biting an elephant's bottom has over that elephant. Perhaps less.

Benjamin Netanyahu never once ordered his guns to cease firing because he was so impressed by a student protest in Oxford that he could not bear to continue.

And some of them must know that others, apart from them, also oppose the bombardment of Gaza — even crusted reactionaries such as me. I recall when the camp was new, paying it a visit and being met by platoons of apprentice totalitarians.

These commissars tried to order me about, told each other not to talk to me, blocked my path and shouted slogans at me through a megaphone when I wouldn't do as I was told.

I thought of the gardeners and how they must feel to have their work so carelessly wrecked.

I asked protesters in vain why they could not have camped in one of the many places in Oxford where they would have done far less damage. But they were just not interested.

I was reminded of the great passage in Places Where They Sing, Simon Raven's novel about the 1960s student revolt, in which a brilliant young undergraduate uses acid to burn stupid slogans into a beautiful Cambridge lawn.

He only grasps what he has done (and begins what will become a lifelong journey of regret and remorse) when he learns later that one of the gardeners was found staring, weeping, at the damage done to his years of work.

Now, when I went on anti-social media to suggest that the protesters' behaviour showed them up as hypocrites, the fashionable Left did not (of course) concede my point. Instead, they tweeted pictures of ruins in Gaza and sneered, as if I did not know, that 'the grass will grow back'.

They added (also as if I did not know) that the dead of Gaza will remain dead. They chided me for allegedly caring more about a patch of lawn than about human lives. This would be a devastating criticism if it were so, but of course it is not.

NOW, the bombardment of Gaza both grieves and infuriates me, because I think it wrong and stupid at the same time. But this does not stop me also worrying about smaller things. Nor does it excuse me from household chores or my daily duties.

It is not as if we let people off for driving through red traffic lights, or failing to take their turn at the shopping, because they are fretting about world affairs.

No more should we let the protesters off the basic rules of behaviour because they are distressed about Gaza.

The real point here is very simple, and I very much hope that those who are still encamped on the grass in the middle of Radcliffe Square, one of the most magnificent urban spaces in Europe, will take note.

Sooner or later, they will tire of what they are doing and need to leave. My advice is straightforward.

When that day comes (and may it be soon), they and all their friends should form work parties and pride themselves on leaving the place clean and swept, without a scrap of debris, trash or mess to be seen.

Some might even offer quietly to pay for any damage they have done. Then the rest of us might take them seriously and believe in their claims to care.

Postmasters are betrayed again!

Now bungling Post Office publishes the names and addresses of staff it persecuted in Horizon scandal

EXCLUSIVE
By **Sam Greenhill** and **Nick Wallis**

THE bungling Post Office has published the names and home addresses of the postmasters it persecuted during the Horizon scandal.

In what appears to be a staggering data breach, their private details were openly posted on its website for anyone to see, the Daily Mail can reveal.

The betrayal has been branded an insult to injury and victims are vowing to 'make them pay'.

The Post Office published a dossier on its corporate website of 555 wronged postmasters involved in suing it in 2019 – complete with their full names and home addresses.

Many are set to receive significant sums in compensation for Britain's biggest miscarriage of justice, and expressed fury at their addresses being exposed.

Claimant No.	Claimant's Full Name (including title)	Claimant's Home Address	Date of entry on Group Register
1			23/02/2017
2			23/02/2017
3			23/02/2017
4			23/02/2017
5			23/02/2017
6			23/02/2017
7			23/02/2017
8			23/02/2017
9			23/02/2017
10			23/02/2017
11			23/02/2017
12			23/02/2017
13			23/02/2017
14			23/02/2017
15			23/02/2017
16			23/02/2017
17			23/02/2017
18			23/02/2017
19			23/02/2017
20			23/02/2017
21			23/02/2017
22			23/02/2017
23			23/02/2017
24			23/02/2017
25			23/02/2017
26			23/02/2017
27			23/02/2017
28			23/02/2017
29			23/02/2017
30			23/02/2017

REDACTED

Failure: Post Office document listing personal details, which the Mail has redacted

Humiliatingly, the document containing the details is entitled 'Confidential Settlement Deed' and spells out that its contents are private. It is even signed by the Post Office's senior lawyer.

After the Mail informed the Post Office yesterday, it removed the list.

It could potentially face an investigation by the Information Commissioner, who last year levied a £1million fine on the Ministry of Defence for losing the data of 245 people.

The 555 former postmasters whose data was published were among the group involved in bringing High Court class litigation against the Post Office in 2019.

Hundreds of innocents were bankrupted, jailed or driven to suicide after being falsely accused of plundering their tills between 1999 and 2015 as a result of glitches in the company's Horizon IT system.

The list includes those featured in ITV's acclaimed four-part drama Mr Bates vs The Post Office, about the long fight for justice led by former sub-postmaster and campaigner Sir Alan Bates.

Campaigner: Sir Alan Bates

Wendy Buffrey, 64, who was wrongly prosecuted as a thief at her branch in Cheltenham, said: 'I'm incandescent. They need to pay for this. It's yet another thing they've done that could potentially destroy one of our lives.

'People know we're all going to get compensation payments – and all our home details are out there? It's horrendous.'

Nichola Arch, 53, falsely accused of theft at her Chalford Hill post office in Gloucestershire, said: 'To say it's adding insult to injury is the understatement of the year.'

'Adding insult to injury'

She added the knowledge that the addresses of people receiving compensation were published would cause anxiety to victims fearing they might be targeted by criminals.

The names and addresses are listed in a 47-page legal agreement, signed on December 10, 2019, which brought the court action to a settlement midway through the trial.

The Post Office apparently meant to publish a 'redacted' version on its website, with personal details blacked out, but instead posted it in full.

Raoul Lumb, a partner at the law firm SMB who specialises in data protection, said it appeared to be 'a remarkable breach' of the UK's data protection laws known as GDPR.

He added: 'It would not surprise me if the Information Commissioner levied a fine to penalise the Post Office.'

The Post Office said last night the document had been removed and it was investigating. It added it was notifying the Information Commissioner's Office of the incident.

The ICO said it had to be informed of data breaches within 72 hours but had not yet received one in this case.

Fujitsu chief called IT a 'success'

By **Ryan Hooper**

A FORMER Fujitsu boss believed his company's doomed Horizon IT system was 'a major success' and that the Post Office was 'a satisfied customer'.

Richard Christou, chief executive at the Japanese firm's holding company until he retired in 2012, claimed he was unaware of problems with the software.

He said he had 'no knowledge' of those prosecutions by the Post Office – and he cited a lack of whistleblowers.

More than 700 sub-postmasters were prosecuted for theft by the Post Office and handed criminal convictions from 1999 to 2015 as the faulty IT system made it appear as though money was missing.

Mr Christou, giving evidence in London yesterday to the inquiry into the scandal, said: 'I had no knowledge of the prosecution of postmasters by Post Office.

'I always regarded Horizon as one of [Fujitsu's] major successes, with Post Office as a satisfied customer.'

He hit back at suggestions he was ultimately accountable for business operations, claiming: 'If you mean that I was responsible for the miscarriage of justice, then I don't accept that. I feel for the sub-postmasters involved – but talking about accountability is a different matter. And certainly I knew nothing about it.'

Mr Christou insisted technical issues were dealt with at the appropriate level and he was unable to point the finger at who was responsible for wrongly sending branch workers to prison.

He added: 'Why were there no whistleblowers? Nobody came to me and blew any whistles. I'm not responsible for it.'

Duncan Tait, who quit as Fujitsu chief executive in 2019 after ten years with the firm, said he 'never became aware of the Horizon integrity issues which have surfaced since'. The inquiry continues.

Ephraim Hardcastle

A NEW page of honour took to the stage on Garter Day – the Hon Guy Tryon, ten, son of the King's godson Lord Charles Tryon. His mother was Dale Tryon, a glamorous Australian nicknamed Kanga by the King and once Camilla's rival for the post of mistress to then Prince Charles. She was routinely described as the only woman who ever really understood him. She suffered ill health for much of her life and died aged 49 in 1997, three months after Princess Diana, a double blow that deeply upset the King.

PRINCE Andrew, banned from being seen in public but still royally indulged, has been busy with behind-the-scenes Royal Ascot duties. He is currently on hand at Windsor Castle to entertain the King's house guests. It apparently comes as quite a shock to some, assuming he'd been banished, to find Andrew gurning at them across the drinks table when they arrive. When they set off for the races he stays behind, presumably to do the washing up.

WHILE Kevin Costner now proudly recalls being told by Prince William that his late mother had 'fancied' him, another Hollywood A-lister got the thumbs down. After meeting Tom Cruise on the set of the first Mission: Impossible film in 1996 with sons William and Harry, Diana concluded on returning to Kensington Palace: 'That's another one off the list – he's too short!'

IMELDA Staunton, pictured, didn't stifle a yawn at her damehood but it was close. 'Honest to God, I don't care,' she says. 'All I ever wanted to do was work and I have done that.' And referring to her long and happy marriage to Downton Abbey's Jim Carter, she adds: 'We have had such a really great and fortunate career and life together that no medal can top that.'

ITV'S Anushka Asthana got Labour deputy leader Angela Rayner to admit that as a teenager she had bedroom wall posters of East 17 and The Prodigy. Turning to Rachel Reeves, she asked: 'Who did you have on your wall?' The Shadow Chancellor replied sheepishly: 'A framed picture of Gordon Brown.' When was he on Top Of The Pops?

NIGEL Farage's chum Jamie Blandford, Duke of Marlborough, threatens to turn up at Royal Ascot today sporting a Reform party rosette. But will the flunkies at the entrance of the ultra-Tory White's club marquee in the Royal Enclosure, Jamie's chosen watering hole, ask his grace to remove his Farage bloom?

FEVERISHLY campaigning as an independent in Islington North, Jeremy Corbyn accuses the Tories of wrongly claiming that he acquired his beloved Finchley allotment by jumping the queue. 'I make jam from the fruit grown on my allotment,' he boasts. Will it be more jam tomorrow if Jeremy gets the heave-ho on July 4?

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V&A & Naomi, the model of partnership

By **Jennifer Ruby**
Showbusiness News Editor

SHE is the first ever supermodel to have an entire V&A exhibition dedicated to her.

So it comes as no surprise that Naomi Campbell pulled out all the stops for the launch of Naomi In Fashion last night — with a star-studded guest list including Kate Moss, Elizabeth Hurley and Katherine Jenkins.

The London-born model, 54, took centre stage in a long white Hugo Boss gown with a plunging neckline and a thigh-high split, with a pair of white-rimmed sunglasses.

Dressed in a silky white dress and black blazer, fellow supermodel Ms Moss, 50, skipped the red carpet. She nevertheless joined the party with her hairstylist friend Sam McKnight, 69, in the courtyard of London's Victoria and Albert Museum.

'Plunging neckline'

Welsh soprano Ms Jenkins, 43, wore a £348 dress by French brand Mirae, while Ms Hurley opted for an eye-catching, £2,250 plunging Roberto Cavalli print gown.

The exhibition, which opens this weekend, will tell the story of Ms Campbell's rise to fame through her show-stopping outfits, many from her personal collection.

Outfits displayed include the Vivienne Westwood Super Elevated Gillie Shoes, which caused her to tumble on a Paris catwalk in 1993.

Also on show is the Dolce and Gabbana dress she wore on her last day of community service in New York after throwing her phone at an employee in 2007.

Naomi In Fashion will run from this Saturday to April 6 next year.

Friends: Kate Moss and hair stylist Sam McKnight

Guests: Liz Hurley and Katherine Jenkins

Centre stage: Naomi Campbell at the V&A last night

The prostate drug that could reduce your dementia risk

By **Xantha Leatham**
Deputy Science Editor

PROSTATE medication could reduce the risk of a common form of dementia, research has suggested.

A team analysed data over three years on 643,000 men who were each taking one of six drugs to treat an enlarged prostate.

Those taking terazosin, doxazosin or alfuzosin were found to be less likely to develop dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB) than those on the other medications.

DLB, which accounts for around one in ten of all dementia cases in the UK, is caused by clumps of protein in the cells of the brain. But experts believe using certain types of prostate medicines may help slow its progression – or even prevent the disease altogether.

Terazosin, doxazosin and alfuzosin are already known to boost energy production in brain cells. Previous studies have suggested this may help slow or prevent neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson's.

The other three drugs – tamsulosin and two 5-alpha-reductase inhibitors – do not enhance energy production in the brain. Lead author Jacob Simmering said: 'Men taking [these] medications had about a 40 per cent lower risk of developing a DLB diagnosis compared with men taking tamsulosin and about a 37 per cent reduction in risk compared with men taking 5-alpha-reductase inhibitors.'

The University of Iowa team said they were excited by the potential of the drugs, which have already been approved, are inexpensive and have been used safely for decades.

'Boosts brain cell energy production'

Mr Simmering said: 'Diseases like dementia with Lewy bodies, or Parkinson's disease, or Alzheimer's disease, are debilitating and we don't really have any good treatments that can modify the disease progression.

'If terazosin and these similar medications can help slow this progression – if not outright preventing the disease – this would be important to preserving cognitive function and quality of life in people with dementia with Lewy bodies,' Dr Simmering said.

Dementia with Lewy bodies is the third most common disease that causes dementia, behind Alzheimer's and vascular dementia.

Symptoms can include visual hallucinations, trouble with sleep, problems with thinking speed and language, and slow movement.

Commenting on the findings, published in the journal Neurology, Dr Julia Dudley of Alzheimer's Research UK said it was 'encouraging to see large studies exploring whether drugs already licensed for other medical conditions could have a protective effect for the diseases that cause dementia'.

But Dr Dudley called for further research, adding: 'This study only looked at whether people developed DLB or not, and future trials would be needed to confirm a causal link between the drug and progression of the disease.

'The study also only included male participants, despite females using the same drugs to treat urinary symptoms, highlighting the need for future research to include wider groups of people,' she added.

Lady Starmer: I felt sick at Gaza protest outside our home

Daily Mail Reporter

THREE pro-Palestine protesters who demonstrated outside Sir Keir Starmer's house – leaving his wife feeling 'sick' – have avoided jail.

The trio hung a banner outside the Labour leader's home in London which read, 'Starmer stop the killing', surrounded by red handprints, on April 9.

They also placed four rows of children's shoes in front of the property to signify the children who have been killed in Gaza since the October 7 attacks.

Leonorah Ward, 21 and Daniel Formentin, 24, both from Leeds, and Zosia Lewis, 23, from Newcastle upon Tyne, were convicted of public order offences under Section 42 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, and with breaching court bail after a one-day trial at Westminster Magistrates' Court.

District Judge Michael Snow said he could 'understand why politicians are so fearful' given the 'number of attacks on our democracy. He added: 'The person who resides here is a senior politician. In the last two years, two MPs have been murdered.'

Giving evidence at the trial, Sir Keir's wife Victoria said she felt 'a bit sick' when she encountered the protesters at her home, and that she drove around the corner in her car.

'I felt apprehensive and uncomfortable,' she added.

Asked by Andrew Morris, defending, she knew it was a 'peaceful protest', Lady Starmer said: 'It would look like a peaceful protest if it hadn't been outside my home.'

A police sergeant who responded to the demonstration told the court that holding the protest outside the family home – instead of outside the House of Commons or Sir Keir's offices – was 'inappropriate'.

'I did not know if they were going to be there ten minutes or a day,' Sergeant Mark Upsdale said.

Section 42 powers cover the harassment of a person at their home address if a police officer suspects that it is causing alarm or distress to the occupant.

'Two MPs killed in two years'

Marketing consultant Formentin told the court that he chose to target Sir Keir because he believed the Labour leader was 'not accurately representing the country' over the conflict.

'There is an overwhelming sense that the young people in this country do want a ceasefire in Palestine,' he claimed.

Wearing a keffiyeh – a traditional, patterned Palestinian scarf – Formentin added: 'We had no plans to confront anyone.'

The trio were representing the group Youth Demand, which describes itself as a 'new youth resistance campaign fighting for an end to genocide'.

Delivering his verdict, Judge Snow said that the protesters had been directed to leave the premises but 'continued' regardless.

They were each sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment, suspended for 12 months. They were also given community orders and prohibited from entering the NW5 postcode, where Sir Keir's property is located.

Ambushed: Victoria Starmer

Accusatory: The banner outside

Corden keeps BBC bosses in dark on Gavin & Stacey plot

By **Jennifer Ruby**
Showbusiness News Editor

VIEWERS have just six months to go until they learn the fate of their beloved characters.

But it seems it's not just avid fans who are being forced to wait to find out what happens in the highly anticipated Gavin & Stacey Christmas Day special – BBC bosses are also being kept in the dark.

Stars and writers James Corden, 45, and Ruth Jones, 57, have gone to such extreme lengths to prevent leaks that they have not even let the BBC's director of comedy Jon Petrie read the completed script.

To stop plot details ruining the sitcom's one-off finale, the pair have let only a 'very, very tight circle' in on the secret.

Petrie, who commissioned the episode as the big Christmas draw, said: 'James and Ruth won't let us look at it yet, which I think is great.

'They are really keeping it under wraps and don't want people to see it outside of their very, very tight circle until they're 100 per cent certain of it.' Petrie said the real challenge will come when filming starts.

He added: 'It'll be hard because it's such a huge show and everyone in all the locations where it's shot, it will be obvious what's being shot. You have to take it as a compliment that it means so much to so many people.'

Petrie, despite having not seen the script, claimed Corden and Ms Jones have come up with a 'brilliant idea and a brilliant story'.

The pair reunited after Corden moved back to the UK after eight years living in Los Angeles where he hosted the Late, Late Show.

Main characters Mathew Horne, 45, and Joanna Page, 47, return with regulars Rob Brydon, 59, Alison Steadman, 77, and Larry Lamb, 76.

The Bafta-winning comedy aired for three seasons between May 2007 and January 2010 before a Christmas Day special in 2019.

Unmasked: Teen who knifed boy of 17 to death on the dancefloor

KILLER

Rage: Yura Varybrus was named yesterday

VICTIM

Stabbed 3 times: Charlie Cosser

By **Rebecca Camber**
Crime and Security Editor

THE 17-year-old killer of an innocent teenager who was stabbed to death on a dancefloor was yesterday unmasked and sentenced to life in jail.

Yura Varybrus knifed Charlie Cosser three times in the chest after being asked to leave a private party last summer when a girl complained she was being sexually harassed.

Yesterday Charlie's mother Tara paid tribute to her son – and said he 'came across pure evil that night'.

Varybrus, 17, was yesterday ordered to serve a minimum of 16 years for the murder and named for the first time. A judge said the stabbing had caused 'immeasurable' grief and identifying the youth responsible 'promotes public confidence in justice'.

Varybrus lashed out in a drunken rage at the 17-year-old victim, whom

'Six months of absolute hell'

he had never met, after he was asked to leave the marquee party at a £1.5million farmhouse attended by around 100 teenagers celebrating the end of A-levels in Warnham, West Sussex.

Charlie's family said Varybrus had put them through 'absolute hell' after he initially admitted the murder and then withdrew the guilty plea. Varybrus claimed he was too drunk to remember what happened, despite being seen with his hands and trousers drenched in blood.

A judge allowed him to withdraw the plea, forcing the family to endure a criminal trial which resulted in his conviction for murder.

Yesterday jurors who returned for the sentencing wept as Mrs Cosser told Brighton Crown Court she had set up a charity to fight knife crime.

'Our young people deserve better', she said. 'They should be able to attend a party and return home safely. Charlie came across pure evil that night.'

Mrs Cosser said she still sends her son a Whatsapp message every morning, adding: 'We have the life sentence, and Charlie has no life. No sentence will be long enough for my child's murderer. It doesn't bring Charlie back.'

Her husband Martin said: 'I never expected Charlie, a loving son, brother, grandson, nephew and friend to so many, to be murdered at a party in a quiet little village near Horsham. He had never had a fight and hated any confrontation.'

Mr Cosser said he was haunted by his son's murder and still walks past his bedroom every day, praying he might be there. 'He (Varybrus) was allowed to vacate his plea, putting my family through six months of absolute hell and a murder trial.'

Varybrus's father Ihor has previously said he felt responsible for not preventing the killer drinking vodka that night.

Varybrus was overheard talking at the party about 'beating someone up' after being asked to go. He yelled, 'Get the shank,' moments before the attack. It was captured on a mobile phone because a girl was filming her friends dancing, not realising what was unfolding in the background.

Charlie stumbled out of the marquee and collapsed. He died two days later in hospital on July 25. His killer was heard to say 'I've stabbed someone five or six times'.

Judge Christine Henson said: 'The impact of the loss of Charlie to his family and friends is immeasurable.'

After the sentencing, Mr Cosser said the minimum tariff of 16 years was 'not enough', adding: 'It's not even a year for every year that Charlie lived. So I can't say that I'm not disappointed. I expected it to be longer.'

Hackers demand £40m from hospital tests lab

By **Shaun Wooller**
Health Editor

A GANG of Russian hackers which targeted a major lab services provider to NHS hospitals is demanding a ransom of almost £40million.

The group, named Qilin, has claimed responsibility for the June 4 cyber attack on Synnovis – a joint venture between the NHS and a private company which analyses blood, urine and tissue samples for hospitals and GP surgeries.

Qilin wants $50million to unlock affected computers and has warned it is preparing to publish data stolen in the breach.

Hundreds of cancer and transplant operations were axed, as well as outpatient appointments, and further cancellations are likely. NHS London said the south-east of the capital has been most affected, including King's College Hospital, Guy's, St Thomas' and Evelina Children's Hospital.

Synnovis said it was working with the Government's National Cyber Security Centre on its continuing investigation into the attack by 'an unauthorised third party'.

By **Katie Hind**

CONSULTANT EDITOR SHOWBUSINESS

HE WAS the chattiest member of One Direction when I interviewed the fresh-faced pop stars of the newly formed boyband in 2011.

Then, Zayn Malik struck me as happy and outstandingly polite. A few months later, he approached me at the Brit Awards to say he remembered the red blouse I had been wearing during the interview and how much he had enjoyed our conversation.

His words stuck with me: it was a moment of true kindness, rare among global heart-throbs.

So it was devastating to watch his appearance, four years and several gruelling tours later, on one of America's biggest chat shows.

On the surface, he had everything to celebrate. The band had just finished a sell-out tour in front of a legion of adoring fans and only a year before, he had announced his engagement to Perrie Edwards of superstar girl-group Little Mix.

Yet as his bandmates joked with host Jimmy Kimmel, Malik — looking gaunt and sallow — could barely muster a smile.

Four months later, breaking the hearts of millions of 'Directioners', Zayn quit the band in the middle of yet another global stadium tour, saying he was taking a break due to 'stress'. His bandmates Harry Styles, Liam Payne, Louis Tomlinson and Niall Horan finished the tour but at the end of the year, announced a 'hiatus' for One Direction which, it later transpired, would be permanent.

While the boys — now all in their 30s — were undeniably richer than they could ever have imagined, they had, confided one of the stars, 'lost their best years to One Direction'.

And they blame one person: Simon Cowell, the music mogul whose TV show The X Factor propelled them into living rooms around the country, and whose record label mischievously named Syco turned them into one of the most successful pop groups in history, selling some 70 million records.

Last week, both Louis and Niall unfollowed their former boss on Instagram — the ultimate signifier of a Millennial's fury.

It came after Cowell, 64, spoke in an interview about his management of One Direction.

'I told them to never complain about paparazzi because they are going to take your pictures, don't complain about invasion of privacy because people will always want to have a picture with you, don't complain about the long hours,' he said to Steven Bartlett, on the latter's Diary Of A CEO podcast.

'I told them if any of the above is going to be a problem then do something else because all this will happen. I told them about the gruelling schedule — it comes with the territory. It just comes with it, you will lose a lot of privacy.'

Cowell also revealed his 'regret' about letting the band own the One Direction name, which meant he couldn't continue cashing in on their legacy after they broke up.

'So if you're listening, One Direction,' he offered, 'then I will buy it back from you.'

There is, I'm told, no chance.

It may be hard to have sympathy for the five heart-throbs, who have all embarked on their own solo careers and each now have eight-figure bank accounts. Leaving behind Cowell and Syco, Harry signed a 'super' solo deal with another label, as did Liam, Zayn and Niall.

Yet in recent years, the boys have been candid about the price they paid for fame.

WITH obsessive 'Directioners' trailing them everywhere they went, the boys were often unable to go out for days. Thousands would wait outside their hotels, hoping for a glimpse of their idols. I'm told that some more than others — namely Liam and Zayn — found this particularly hard to deal with.

They were like caged animals,' says an insider close to the group. 'They weren't able to go out and do what other boys of their age were doing, but it was a case of "Simon Says" and they did it.

'Simon was the boss, he wanted them out there. He wanted them performing. They were cash cows, pure and simple. There seemed little care for the band's mental health though, and how it would affect them in the future.'

Undoubtedly, their schedule was gruelling. The band performed an average of one concert every two days during their Take Me Home tour in 2013, fulfilling the 124 dates that Cowell demanded of them. That, I'm told, put pressure on them — not just as a group but also as young men.

'They couldn't have normal relationships,' said a friend close to one band member, who recalls that in 2013, while performing in Australia, Perrie Edwards had to be sneaked into the One Direction hotel through its laundry room.

'It was the only way she and Zayn got to see one another. It might seem funny, but actually it was hard and stressful. Sometimes the band just wanted a day off, just to rest but instead they were put on a private jet and flown to the next arena or stadium.'

Cowell, on the other hand, took the firm view that he had given these five young men an opportunity of a lifetime — something most teenagers can only dream of. Those close to the former X Factor judge have staunchly defended him over his treatment of the band. One tells me: 'Simon set One Direction up to never have to work again.

'If they put the work in when they were young then they were made for life. Simon is a grafter, he has worked hard all of his life so if you give some youngsters the chance to have fame and fortune, surely they will crack on with it and not complain. They could have gone on forever and ever.'

Yet one incident following the break-up of the band strained the relationship between Cowell and his proteges.

In 2016, Louis Tomlinson had embarked on a solo career and was planning to promote his debut single by performing it live for the first time on The X Factor final, which, of course was made by Cowell's production company. Just days before he was due to perform, Tomlinson's mother died.

His bandmates Liam and Harry were in the U.S. yet Cowell implored them, at a day's notice, to make the journey to the show's West London studios to be with their friend.

Yet, sources close to Liam told me that on their arrival in London, the pair felt that Cowell had seemed to be cynically exploiting Louis' personal tragedy to get the band back together and boost his television ratings. Liam and Harry were said to be 'fuming' and the band refused to perform, remaining backstage.

One friend told me at the time: 'Of course they all wanted to be there for Louis, they were so terribly sad for him but they felt once again they were being summoned to perform for Simon.'

Some of the band have come out less damaged than others. While Niall (who co-founded a golf management company in 2016) and Harry are 'extremely robust' and have a 'healthy attitude towards fame', Liam — who was hospitalised in Italy earlier this year with a kidney infection — and Zayn have not.

Zayn was reportedly axed by

Pictures: KEN MCKAY / TALKBACK THAMES / SHUTTERSTOCK / FILMMAGIC

Newly formed: One Direction, Liam, Louis, Harry, Niall and Zayn in 2010. Right, Simon Cowell

Simon Cowell created One Direction and made them wealthy superstars. But their camp says they were just 'cash cows'. Now he's revealed he warned them how tough fame would be...

So whose side are YOU on in the most bitter feud in pop?

American label RCA Records in 2021 due to concerns about his alleged cannabis use and an altercation with his ex, model Gigi Hadid — the mother of his daughter Khai — and her mother Yolanda.

The once-chatty pop star with puppy-like enthusiasm whom I met in 2011 now lives a quiet life in a weatherboarded farmhouse in rural Pennsylvania.

Louis, meanwhile, has been open about struggles with his mental health, suffering panic attacks and bouts of agoraphobia. As well as losing his mother, his younger sister Félicité died of an accidental overdose in 2019.

So, with his grand plans for a One Direction reunion in tatters, what of Simon Cowell?

Although his comments about the band on Steven Bartlett's podcast made headlines, the interview was actually meant to publicise Cowell's new project.

He is on the hunt for a new boyband — on another reality series.

Earlier this month, Cowell was seen drumming up publicity for his new venture by donning dungarees to put up a giant billboard of his face with the words: 'Simon needs you. Future megastars wanted for new boyband. No time wasters.'

Cowell has signed with a production company Box To Box films to make a TV series out of his hunt for a One Direction-style band and there have been rumours that he is at the centre of a bidding war between streaming services.

'It's all a bit of a mystery as to where Simon is going to put this programme,' says a television insider. 'There are rumours circulating but nothing concrete. How things have changed for him: once he would have had his arm bitten off by ITV.'

The truth is that, apart from his role as a judge on Britain's Got Talent and American's Got Talent — both created by his production company — Cowell's reign as king of showbiz is over.

During the X Factor's heyday, the show pulled in more than 14 million viewers and Cowell was always spotted dining with celebrity pals at London's finest restaurants where, without fail, there would be paparazzi waiting to snap him on his way out.

He would summon newspaper editors to his former home in Holland Park, West London, for a spin in his Maserati, or simply for a takeaway curry.

TODAY though, things have changed. Those who know Cowell say that he rarely sees his famous friends, with the exception of Amanda Holden, whose husband Chris Hughes signed him to his YMU talent agency.

His harem of women, which included his exes, former Page 3 model Jackie St Clair, Terri Seymour and Mezhgan Hussainy, is a thing of the past. These days, Cowell splits his time between London and the countryside and enjoys quiet nights in with girlfriend Lauren Silverman and their son Eric, ten.

'Arguably, his star has waned somewhat,' says one former employee of the music mogul.

'He was probably the most powerful man in British showbusiness — what he wanted, he got. It just isn't the same for him any more. He had a long stint at the helm of the X Factor and BGT, and the ratings were incredible.

'But things have most definitely changed for him. Of course, he did a good job for One Direction but to still be talking about them now is a bit odd.

'It could be said that he is living in the past.'

KUROSU

EVERY day in the Mail you can play Kurosu, the most addictive brainteaser since Sudoku. There are two rules:

1: Fill in each space with either a nought or a cross so there are no more than two consecutive noughts or crosses in any row or column. Important note: diagonals don't count.

2: Each row and column must contain three noughts and three crosses.

Solution on Mail Puzzles back page

O					X
	X		X		
X				O	X
					O
		O			
	X		X	X	

Today's difficulty rating ★★★

PLAY Kurosu and 47 puzzles like them every day on your tablet or smartphone with the Mail Digital Edition, your Mail newspaper on your screen. Get a trial offer at mailpuzzles.co.uk
■ Daily Mail Kurosu Volume 1 is £8.99 at mailshop.co.uk/3for20 or call 020 3176 2937. Buy 3 or more Daily Mail puzzle books and save 20 per cent. Free UK delivery on orders over £25.

Confident women set high bar when choosing a man

By **Xantha Leatham**
Deputy Science Editor

WOMEN who rate themselves as attractive are more likely to be drawn to taller men, a study suggests.

And this could be because those who have higher self-esteem set higher standards for potential love interests, according to experts.

Researchers from Texas A&M International University recruited 247 heterosexual women with an average age of 24 and showed them images of men of varying heights from 5ft 3in to 6ft 3in.

Each male was pictured next to a 5ft 8in woman to show the height comparison. Analysis published in the journal of Evolutionary Psychological Science revealed that the women considered the men more attractive, masculine, dominant and higher in fighting ability as their height and shoulder width increased.

The findings did not extend to all increases in men's height, only in relation to men who were taller than the woman they were pictured next to.

Doctor: I caught Letby 'virtually red-handed'

By **Liz Hull**

A SENIOR consultant who said he caught Lucy Letby 'virtually red-handed' trying to murder a premature baby yesterday said he 'feared retribution' from hospital bosses if he went to the police.

Dr Ravi Jayaram said managers 'explicitly' told medical staff not to involve police because it risked damaging the hospital's reputation.

Dr Jayaram, who appears regularly on TV, said it was a 'matter of infinite regret' that he hadn't by-passed bosses and gone straight to police.

He told Manchester Crown Court of the hostile culture for clinicians in the NHS who raise safety concerns. 'There was a strategy really to keep us quiet,' he said.

'A strategy to keep us quiet'

'All that would have happened, had I picked up the phone to police, is they would have got in touch with the Trust, spoken to the medical director and [they would have] said, "Just ignore them, they are a bunch of complaining paediatricians".'

The doctor was giving evidence on the fifth day of Letby's retrial. She is accused of trying to murder a girl, who was born 15 weeks early, by dislodging her breathing tube within two hours of her birth, on February 17, 2020.

By then, the jury has been told, the former neo-natal nurse had already murdered five babies and would go on to murder two more.

Jurors in her original trial failed to reach a verdict regarding the allegation that she tried to murder Baby K, and a retrial was ordered.

Dr Jayaram admitted he was suspicious that Letby was harming babies when he went to check on Baby K at around 3.45am.

Ben Myers KC, defending, said that, if he really believed he had caught the nurse 'red-handed', he would have called 999. Dr Jayaram replied: 'No, I disagree. There was an element of denial, an element of fear of retribution from those people above.'

Letby denies attempted murder. The case continues.

TV sex therapist who said his 'penis was like a laser beam' is to pay victim £200,000

ITV star: Michael Lousada

By **Richard Percival**

A WOMAN who claimed she was raped by a sex therapist who appeared on ITV's This Morning has been awarded more than £200,000 in damages.

Ella Janneh sued Michael Lousada over accusations that he raped and sexually assaulted her at his clinic in Belsize Park, north London, on August 18, 2016.

Lawyers for Ms Janneh, 37, who has waived her right to anonymity, told a civil trial in London earlier this year that she suffered a panic attack during the session and 'did not consent to the sexual acts'.

Mr Lousada, 57, denied the allegations, claiming the sexual activity was consensual and part of 'legitimate' therapeutic activity.

Ms Janneh launched a civil claim against the therapist for personal injury and negligence after the Crown Prosecution Service said it would not pursue criminal charges in 2018.

The trial heard that Ms Janneh first visited Mr Lousada in 2011, and then again in 2012, after suffering panic symptoms during consensual sex, which she believed stemmed from abuse she suffered as a child.

Her barrister Nina Ross said she returned in 2016 for a £750 'body work' session, which she believed was similar to physiotherapy.

In court documents, Ms Janneh said that in this session Mr Lousada told her his penis was 'like a laser beam' that could 'burn up' and 'absorb' trauma.

She said he penetrated her, but she 'never, ever, ever would have asked him to'. Ms Janneh claimed the incident caused her to suffer a panic attack, leaving her 'incapable of providing valid consent'.

Mr Lousada admitted penetrating his client, but said he repeatedly received 'clear verbal consent' and that Ms Janneh 'reported feeling like dark energy was being released'. The therapist, who now lives in Germany, said he recorded in notes after the session that she 'left feeling empowered and optimistic' and 'was not obviously agitated or upset at that stage'.

'She lacked the capacity to consent'

Mr Lousada's barrister David Boyle told the court his work 'may not align with societal norms' but declared that 'penile penetration' was a 'legitimate activity' he had engaged in with '30 to 40 clients'.

In his judgment yesterday, Mr Justice Jeremy Baker said: 'I am sure as a result of the defendant having instructed the claimant to regress into her childhood persona as an abused child, and touching her in the manner in which he did during the third session, caused the claimant to become dissociative. When he suggested he would use his penis to absorb trauma, the claimant lacked capacity to consent.'

He ruled that Ms Janneh had established her ground of 'trespass to the person, namely battery', and that she should be paid at least £217,000 in damages.

Ms Janneh said: 'I dedicate this to every victim turned away by the police, the CPS, or their loved ones. I hope that I can encourage others to speak their truth.'

Speaking out: Ella Janneh wins case

Dead? BBC has a job for you

Daily Mail Reporter

BBC bosses were left red-faced after advertising for a job role which encouraged candidates who identified 'as dead' to apply.

The unfortunate spelling blunder was spotted on the mailing list entry for a full-time 'Assistant Producer, Audio North (Classical Music)', based in Salford.

The role is part of a 'positive action' scheme which is aimed at those who are deaf, disabled or neurodivergent. But instead of reading 'identify as deaf', the entry mistakenly read 'to apply you should identify as dead, disabled or neurodivergent'.

The spelling mistake featured on the careers mailing list but not the advert on the BBC Careers website.

Europe's plummeting

To keep a stable population, nations need a birth rate of 2.1 babies per woman. But not a single European country reaches that. As a third of young Britons say they don't want children, experts are warning we face 'staggering social change'

by Sue Reid

THE rights and wrongs of mass immigration, net zero and the traditional family are hot issues in both Britain and Europe.

They are high on the political agenda in the run-up to our General Election and provoked deep splits of opinion at polls in the EU's 27 nations earlier this month.

But there is another topic on the horizon that is arguably more important than these for all our futures.

It is babymaking — or the lack of it. The rate at which children are born in the West is plummeting, which will provoke 'staggering social change' warn demographic experts — and change that will not be for the better.

The problem is concentrating the minds of political leaders, Christian churches and social scientists as well as fertility doctors. But none of them has yet found a way of solving what is called the 'baby gap'.

Earlier this year it was the Pope who entered the fray: 'Without children,' he warned, 'a country loses its desire for the future'.

He was speaking after it became clear that births in Italy — where thousands of primary schools have closed because there are no children to go to them — dipped to a record low of 379,000 last year after 15 years of relentless decline.

The Catholic country's Right-wing Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has now mounted a family-first campaign, with papal backing.

Ms Meloni says her plan to boost the number of births to half a million annually within a decade is essential to prevent Italian society from collapsing as a result of the elderly outnumbering younger workers in the population.

Italy is not a freakish outlier. Spain, another Catholic country, is facing a steeper decline in new arrivals.

The facts are devastating and simple. To maintain a stable national population, every woman must have 2.1 babies. This is called the fertility replacement rate. Any lower than that and the number of young people — whose taxes fund the welfare and health services vital for the care of the elderly — will drop like a stone.

'Implications of falling fertility are immense'

Yet there is not one country in the EU that has a fertility rate above this threshold. And, as yet, no nation in history facing a collapsing population has ever turned the situation around and pushed it back above the fertility replacement rate.

In a ground-breaking report in March, The Lancet medical journal predicted the trend would result in 'staggering social change'. It said the 'implications of falling fertility trends are immense', and will lead to the complete reshaping of the world we live in today.

'There will only be six countries, Samoa, Somalia, Tonga, Niger, Chad and Tajikistan where the replacement rate will be above 2.1 by the end of the century,' said the report.

In the UK, 2022 figures showed that women were having an average of 1.49 babies, much lower than the 2.6 rate achieved in the 1960s — for the first time ever, half of women now reach their 30th birthday without having a child. The 1.3 rate projected for 2100 is lower still.

Across Western Europe, it will drop slightly less, from 1.53 in 2021 to 1.37, by this century's close.

The EU's statistics and data service Eurostat indicates that the population of the bloc will fall by 6 per cent by 2100. It might not sound excessive but the implications are deeply alarming.

For by 2100, those aged 65 and over are predicted to account for 32 per cent of the population compared to 22 per cent today.

And we in the West face a dilemma over who will foot the escalating bill for their pensions and welfare.

The Lancet — which is Left-leaning — declared that an obvious solution is to allow more people to come to the EU and Britain from countries with younger populations. Natalia V Bhattacharjee, one of the authors, pointed out: 'Reliance on open immigration will become necessary to sustain economic growth.'

This, of course, would be anathema to Right-wing parties within the EU which gained popularity at the recent elections by fighting against open borders and, like Italy's Giorgia Meloni, champion the need to boost the indigenous birth rate.

Intriguingly, the bloc's populist parties have broad appeal, not just among the conservative elderly but also the young.

Both groups, say pollsters, are tired of immigration and, above all, the resulting shortage of affordable housing. According to the website Politico, 'the taboo of voting for populist, anti-migration parties, is fading'.

Which means the problem of the baby shortage will become an ever more fractious issue on the political agenda.

Tesla billionaire Elon Musk, owner of X (formerly Twitter) and the father of 11 children by three mothers, is a fanatic about 'population collapse' which he believes is a bigger risk to the world than global warming.

This was apparent in a recent exchange on X between Musk and the Netherlands' hard-Right leader, Geert Wilders, in which the Dutch politician warned of a collapse of Western values in his country thanks to open borders, a stance shared by other EU populists.

'Agreed,' responded Musk. 'But if the birth rate stays as low as it is [1.6] your Dutch nation will die out by its own hand.'

After months of tortuous political negotiations, Wilders has finally pulled together a coalition government which vows to take a much stronger stance on immigration. It did well in the EU-wide elections.

A major confrontation with Brussels is now likely because the coalition has applied to the EU to opt out of its asylum policies and is demanding the right to 'forcibly' deport those who are refused asylum 'as much as possible'.

Meanwhile, Viktor Orban, leader of Hungary's conservative and Christian governing party Fidesz who has also clashed with the EU on immigration levels, is so worried about the falling birth rates that he has introduced a pioneering 'traditional family first' policy to encourage babymaking.

When his party came to power in 2010, the birth rate was at an all-time low of 1.25. Through cash handouts, tax incentives, interest-free loans, subsidised nursery places and the nationalisation of IVF clinics, young couples have been successfully encouraged to have more children.

Maternity leave has been raised to 24 weeks, mothers are encouraged to stay at home to have as many babies as possible, while fathers work as the main breadwinner (paternity leave is curtailed at just ten days). By 2021, the birth rate was up to 1.59, the number of marriages had doubled and abortions had fallen too.

But there was a caveat. Incentives for couples to have babies were tied to strict rules concerning previous employment and regular tax returns, effectively ruling out huge numbers of immigrants, the Roma, and others who were working in the black economy.

The Hungarian model has been hailed by both Italy's Ms Meloni and the Pope as a 'perfect example' of how to tackle the crisis.

'A great battle is needed to defend families, God and all the things that built our civilisation,' said Meloni at a Demographic Summit in Hungary earlier this year. 'Fewer children are being born in richer nations and we need

birth rate timebomb

GROWING FERTILITY CRISIS

Birth rates for 2022 show a continent falling well short of the 2.1 babies per woman needed to keep its population stable

Country	Live births per woman
Sweden	1.53
Finland	1.32
Norway	1.41
Estonia	1.41
Denmark	1.55
Latvia	1.47
Ireland	1.54
Netherlands	1.49
Lithuania	1.27
UK	1.49
Germany	1.46
Poland	1.29
Czech Republic	1.64
Belgium	1.53
Slovakia	1.57
Austria	1.41
Hungary	1.56
Switzerland	1.39
Romania	1.71
Georgia	1.83
France	1.79
Serbia	1.59
Bulgaria	1.65
Slovenia	1.55
Spain	1.16
Italy	1.24
Turkey	1.63
Portugal	1.43
Croatia	1.53
Cyprus	1.37
Malta	1.08
Albania	1.21
Greece	1.32

LIVE BIRTHS PER WOMAN: More than 1.6; 1.5 - 1.59; 1.4 - 1.49; 1.3 - 1.39; 1.2 - 1.29; Less than 1.2

Source: Eurostat and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (University of Washington, US)

Picture: GETTY

to mobilise resources to support the family.'

Her words chimed with the view of the Italian public — 74 per cent say the descending birth rate is an urgent problem.

La Stampa, an Italian newspaper, has said that 'for every child under six years old, there are now five elderly people', pointing out that this is unsustainable given that 'three workers [are needed to] support every pensioner'. The paper added a chilling prediction: that by 2050, Italy's worker-pensioner ratio will fall to 1:1. At which point Italy's welfare state will collapse completely.

Yet some refuse to accept we face an impending crisis. The issue of the 'baby gap' has been weaponised by those who bizarrely claim it is a conspiracy theory cooked up predominantly by the so-called Far Right.

Even the moderate Labour MP Rosie Duffield has been targeted for engaging in debate about the 'baby gap'. She was forced to pull out of a cross-party Westminster panel discussion on the UK's dwindling births in December last year following an avalanche of online threats condemning her planned appearance.

Students at Cambridge University have also boycotted a showing of a compelling documentary called Birthgap — Childless World which was produced by the British data scientist Stephen J. Shaw who has warned that 'no nation is known to have emerged from the grip of long-term low birth rates'. The YouTube film highlights the perils of population collapse and to an extent blames childlessness on women delaying childbirth and or failing to find a partner during their most fertile years.

The students condemned the film as 'anti-feminist and misogynistic', with one saying the documentary's ideas were 'categorically untrue'. Another critic pronounced that women should not be coerced by the state into how many babies they bear, even though Mr Shaw's film gives exactly that same warning.

There is, however, no doubt that the UK's demographic forecast is a cause for concern. Fraser Nelson, editor of The Spectator magazine who chaired the Westminster debate which Rosie Duffield pulled out of, said recently: 'My own view is we are living a lie by assuming that there will be a massive workforce around to generate tax to support the pensions and related NHS expenditure in the future.'

The evidence is overwhelming. In May, it emerged that the number of babies being born in London has fallen by a fifth in a decade as experts warn that people are delaying or deciding against having children.

Babies born in London are down by a fifth

So dramatic is the effect that the NHS is consulting on plans to close the maternity units at one of two north London hospitals — the Royal Free in Hampstead or the Whittington in Archway. Pupil numbers in our state schools are expected to drop by 500,000 in the next three years.

Already some primaries in London have been forced to close or merge as there are not enough parents needing places.

Would state intervention help? Perhaps. But Sweden's famously generous paternity leave policy hasn't boosted births.

A decade ago, Sweden registered a fertility rate of 1.9, but since then it has drifted downwards with no sign of stopping. Meanwhile, a 'Do it for Denmark' campaign to improve their birth rate was a flop.

A survey by London University earlier this year revealed that 31 per cent of Gen Z Britons (born between 1997 and 2010) are not interested in having babies. Among the most commonly cited reasons were 'wanting time for themselves' and 'finding children a nuisance'.

Only time, perhaps, will make them question this stance and realise that, far from being a nuisance, children are the lifeblood of their own futures.

Red Arrows: 60 Seasons
Gnats looping, 1976

Red letter day for the Arrows

Daily Mail Reporter

THIS year marks 60 years of daring displays by the Red Arrows and Royal Mail is marking the occasion with a thrilling set of stamps.

The main set of eight feature images of the RAF Aerobatic Team's red, white and blue trails in the sky. An additional sheet of four stamps showcases performances above landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower and Niagara Falls.

Established in 1964, the Red Arrows and their Gnat jet trainers became the showpiece of the RAF. They have been flying BAE Systems Hawks since 1980. The stamps are available from today.

Shopkeeper who hired hitman to murder wife in 1981 is jailed at last

By **Andrew Levy**

A PENSIONER faces the prospect of dying behind bars after he was convicted yesterday of arranging his wife's murder more than 40 years ago.

Allen Morgan, 73, was locked in what the prosecution called a 'passionate but forbidden' affair with his current wife Margaret, 75, when he had Carol Morgan killed.

He hired a hitman – who remains unidentified – and prepared a 'cast-iron' alibi for his whereabouts while she was hacked to death with an axe or machete in the storeroom of their corner shop in Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire.

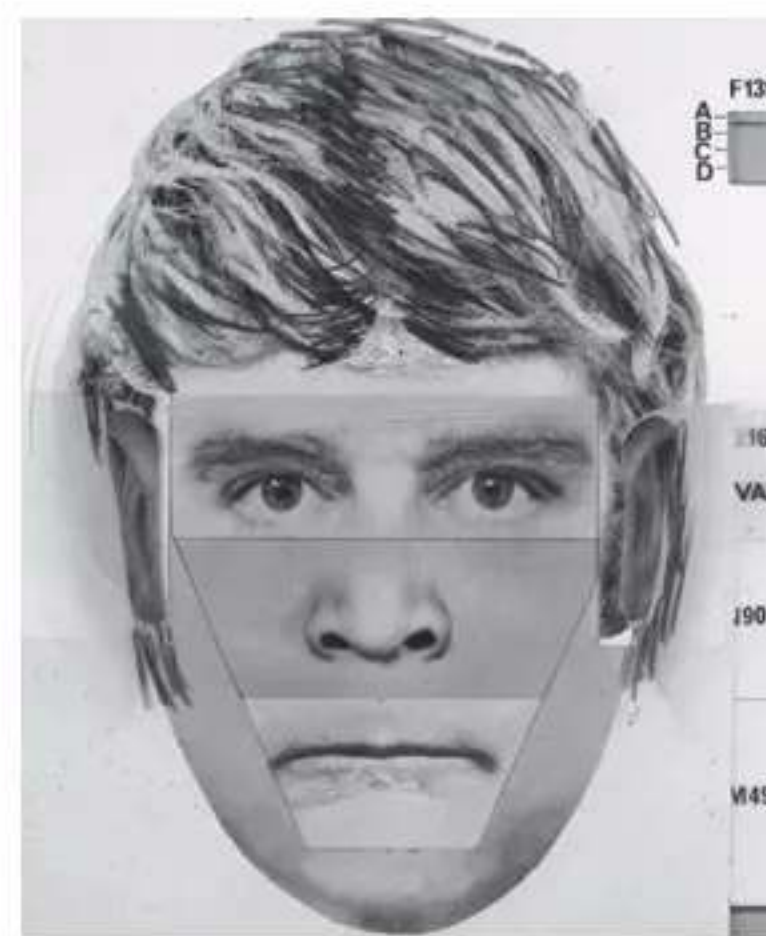
Allen and Margaret married in 1982 – a year after 36-year-old Carol's death – and have remained together ever since. They lived in Brighton and were held in high regard by locals as long-term members and former club captains of East Brighton Golf Club.

'Killing planned and paid for'

Cold case detectives finally achieved a breakthrough after finding a witness, Jane Bunting, 60, who revealed that Allen had discussed paying someone to kill his wife before her death.

He was found guilty of conspiracy to murder after a two-month trial at Luton Crown Court and will be sentenced next month. Margaret was acquitted of the same offence and left the courtroom without looking at him.

Mr Justice Martin Spencer congratulated the police on the conviction, saying: 'This has been an astonishing investigation after so many years.'

Carol was found in a pool of blood at Food Fayre on August 13, 1981. She had more than a dozen wounds to her head. Detectives hunted for a distinctive suspect with 'piggy' nostrils seen carrying two shopping bags stuffed with cash before driving away in a green Ford Cortina.

Prosecutor Pavlos Panayi KC told the jury: 'The murder of Carol Morgan was no random attack. It was planned and paid for by the two defendants.'

The couple met while Allen was on grocery rounds for the shop and would have sex three times a week while Margaret's husband was at work.

In a case that relied heavily on financial evidence, the court was told they wanted to move in together but could not afford to ditch their respective spouses. 'That problem was solved by the death of Carol Morgan,' said Mr Panayi. Allen inherited his wife's estate, including her share of the shop.

On the night of the murder, Allen made the 'highly unusual' decision to take his wife's young children, Jane and Dean, to the cinema. They arrived home to discover Carol's body.

Detectives failed to pin the crime on anyone, and it was not until the case was reviewed in 2018 that Ms Bunting was interviewed. She revealed that Allen had been in a pub with her and Margaret when he asked whether an ex-boyfriend of hers would 'know someone' who could carry out a contract killing.

Allen and Margaret went on holiday in Malta the month after the murder, where he insisted: 'I can't go on mourning forever.'

They moved briefly to Doncaster and then to Sheffield, before putting down roots in Brighton. Margaret worked as a teacher and Allen as a caretaker and they joined the golf club where they continued to command loyalty from members as evidence was heard at their trial.

Detective Superintendent Carl Foster, who led the cold case investigation, said yesterday 'we will do all in our power' to bring the killer to justice.

Wedding day: Allen Morgan and his wife Carol and, top right, a police photo of him now. Right: E-fit of suspect still at large

June 20, 2024 ON THIS DAY

FROM THE DAILY MAIL ARCHIVE

JUNE 20, 1958

THE House of Representatives today approved a Bill authorising President Eisenhower to exchange more nuclear secrets with America's Allies. It also passed an amendment to allow Britain to buy a nuclear engine for her first atomic submarine.

JUNE 20, 1975

DETECTIVES believe Lord Lucan plotted to murder his estranged wife, but the nanny, Sandra Rivett, was killed by mistake — it should have been her night off. Scotland Yard is convinced that Lucan – who, an inquest jury decided yesterday, murdered Mrs Rivett — intended putting his wife's body in the canvas bag in which Mrs Rivett was found.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

JOHN GOODMAN, 72, starred in the sitcom Roseanne and in The Flintstones film. An Anglophile, he said he enjoys visiting the UK 'just to hang out. I love going to the theatre there. For me, it's very special. The British actors are just top hole.'

CLAIRE TOMALIN, 91. The London-born author has written biographies of Austen, Hardy and Dickens. When she won the main Whitbread award for her book on Samuel Pepys, she outdid her writer husband Michael Frayn (dubbed the 'Posh and Becks of books').

BORN ON THIS DAY

ALAN LONGMUIR (1948-2018). The tartan-clad bassist was a founding member of the Bay City Rollers, who sold 100 million records. He said he was: 'Just a plumber from Edinburgh who got lucky.'

TERENCE YOUNG (1915-1994). The Shanghai-born British film-maker directed three 007 films, including the first, Dr No. He had already directed Sean Connery, in Action Of The Tiger, which he called 'a terrible film, very badly directed, very badly acted... but Sean was impressive'.

ON JUNE 20...

IN 1887, Queen Victoria celebrated her Golden Jubilee by attending a banquet with 50 kings and princes.

IN 1998, Baddiel, Skinner and The Lightning Seeds were at UK No 1 with 3 Lions '98.

WORD WIZARDRY

GUESS THE DEFINITION

Flamfew (coined 1580)

A) A person with red hair. B) The wrong way. C) Gaudily-dressed woman. *Answer below*

PHRASE EXPLAINED

Dear John letter: meaning a letter ending a romantic relationship; originated in the U.S. during World War II, when the recipients of these letters were usually in the armed forces overseas, whose female partners at home had made new liaisons; the name John often meant 'everyman'.

QUOTE FOR TODAY

'Healey's first law of politics: when you're in a hole, stop digging.'

Lord (Denis) Healey, former Labour chancellor (1917-2015)

JOKE OF THE DAY

WHERE do frogs keep their savings? *In the river bank.*

Guess The Definition answer: C.

Compiled by ETAN SMALLMAN and ADAM JACOT DE BOINOD

Eden Confidential

King's favourite India becomes a godmother in war-torn Kyiv

AS A godchild of King Charles, and a bridesmaid when he married Lady Diana Spencer, India Hicks is used to grand ceremonies.

Now, I hear, the designer has made a heartfelt journey to war-torn Ukraine to become a godmother herself.

India, a granddaughter of the 1st Earl Mountbatten of Burma, took part in the christening at the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra, the most sacred monastery in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.

Her godchild is Zakhar, the son of a Ukrainian couple with whom she has become good friends through her work with the disaster relief organisation Global Empowerment Mission. 'One of the team leaders of the front-line areas is Vitaliy Kubushka,' she tells me.

'We have been on several missions together over the past two years, and he and his wife, Olga, have become close friends.

'It was a very great honour to have been invited to be the godmother to his second son, Zakhar, at the weekend.'

India, 56, has been travelling to Kyiv every few months since she became an executive board member of Global Empowerment Mission. At the party afterwards, she gave a speech in praise of her godson's mother. 'Your husband every week puts himself in danger, and he's there, but you're at home worrying every week,' she told her.

'You are strong. All of these women in war are so strong to be at home. Amazing mothers doing important jobs like giving birth.'

India took her son Amory Flint Wood, 24, on the trip and the pair have remained in Ukraine this week to help deliver aid to eastern parts of the country.

Honour: India carries Zakhar at the christening in Ukraine

■ *CELINE DION was visibly moved as she explained why she was unable to attend a screening of her documentary I Am: Celine Dion at Bafta in Piccadilly. The singer's career has been on hold since she was diagnosed with a rare neurological disorder, stiff person syndrome, in 2022. 'This is my love letter to fans,' she said in a video.*

Grand old Duke of Kent parties on!

HE LOOKED frail on the Buckingham Palace balcony at Trooping the Colour, but the Duke of Kent is determined to keep partying at the age of 88.

The duke, a first cousin of the late Queen Elizabeth, attended a party to celebrate the opening of hotel The Peninsula London with his daughter, Lady Helen Taylor, 60, (pictured).

Using a walking stick, the duke joined other members of the Royal Family including the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh and his brother, Prince Michael of Kent.

Remarkably at his age, the duke is still one of the 'working royals', which is why he was allowed on the Palace balcony for the fly-past on Saturday, unlike his children or grandchildren.

Like peas in a pod: Sophie and Bea's matching outfits

ARE the Royal Family taking 'recycling' of outfits to new heights?

I ask only because Princess Beatrice (right) wore a dress at Royal Ascot yesterday that looked almost identical to the one worn by the Duchess of Edinburgh (top) at the Order of the Garter ceremony at Windsor Castle two days earlier.

The Matchmaker floral midi dress is by Australian designer Zimmermann and costs £1,350.

The label, founded by sisters Nicky and Simone Zimmermann, was worn by the Princess of Wales during her visit Down Under in 2014.

Previously, Royal 'recycling' has been confined to environmentally conscious women wearing the same outfit more than once.

■ *FORMER Newsnight rottweiler Jeremy Paxman has lost none of his bite. Labour's health spokesman Wes Streeting got a mauling when he appeared on the Movers And Shakers podcast to set out plans to tackle shortfalls in treatment of Parkinson's, from which Paxo suffers. Declaring the NHS 'broken', he was abruptly interrupted by Paxman barking: 'What are you going to do about it?' For Streeting, it was a flashback: 'When I was president of the National Union of Students, I had the terrifying experience of appearing on Newsnight with Paxo, and I didn't think it was gonna happen to me again.'*

Fox's new fiancee reveals sparkler

LAURENCE FOX'S fondness for controversy was never likely to perturb Betty Barker, a Californian who dubs herself a 'rebel for humanity'.

But there's one convention she's ready to embrace – marriage. 'We're both thrilled,' actor-turned-activist Fox, 46, tells me at a London party hosted by Kathy Gyngell. He shared this snap in which Betty — a model, 'body double' and stuntwoman — displays her engagement ring.

Fox, who has two sons with ex-wife Billie Piper, has little faith in London Mayor Sadiq Khan, telling me: 'It's one of the reasons [we're] leaving London for the country.'

Brave Leah's 'desperate bid to fight off the predator who killed her'

By **Elizabeth Haigh** and **Charlie Moloney**

LEAH Croucher would have put up a desperate fight against a sexual 'predator' before he killed her, an inquest heard yesterday.

The 19-year-old's body was found in the loft of a house in October 2022 – almost four years after vanishing.

The remains of the martial arts expert were found ten minutes from where she vanished in Furzton, Milton Keynes, when a handyman went to investigate a bad smell.

Senior coroner Tom Osborne yesterday concluded the teenager was murdered by convicted child sex offender Neil Maxwell.

Highlighting a number of failings by Thames Valley Police, Mr Osborne described the 49-year-old as a 'predator' whose risk to the public had been 'underestimated

'She was black belt in taekwondo'

and unreported'. Detective Superintendent Kevin Brown told the inquest Maxwell had a 'predilection for young females' and was wanted by police at the time of Leah's murder. The 'repeat offender' had gone on the run over a sex assault in 2018.

Milton Keynes Coroner's Court heard that Maxwell had been at the house where Leah's remains were found as a maintenance man and had a set of keys. The owners of the four-bedroom property lived abroad and used it as a holiday home.

Thames Valley Police carried out an 'unprecedented' investigation – searching 3,500 houses, examining 1,200 documents and 1,600 messages, and taking 500 statements.

The name of sexually violent Maxwell came up in May 2019 – weeks after he died by suicide – but officers ruled out a link.

Taking into account that Leah was an internationally regarded taekwondo black belt, DSI Brown said: 'I believe this is likely to be an unwarranted sexual attack on Leah and, because of her martial arts capability, she reacted.

'I believe she would have defended herself. That may have escalated the situation.' Leah was identified from dental records but a pathologist was unable to ascertain a cause of death. Her mother, Claire Croucher, told the inquest that Leah was a 'true fighter who would never give in'.

She added: 'Leah was a kind, caring soul who worried about others and did her best to make sure those around her were comfortable and happy.

'Her smile lit up the hearts of all the people enveloped in it. She had grown from a shy little girl to a confident young woman'.

Describing her daughter's death as 'cruel, unfair [and] unjust', Mrs Croucher added: 'The void her loss has left has broken us. It has shattered our souls, stolen our faith and destroyed our hearts.'

Victim: Leah Croucher, 19, was a taekwondo black belt

Baby mauled to death by family dog in her home

By **Emily Jane Davies**

A SEVEN-MONTH-OLD girl has died in hospital after 'being bitten' by a pet dog.

The baby suffered 'serious injuries to her head' at a property in Coventry on Sunday afternoon. Emergency services arrived at the address within minutes of being alerted, West Midlands Police said.

The force added: 'A seven-month-old baby girl received treatment at the scene by paramedics before being rushed to hospital for further treatment. Tragically, she died a short time later.

'The pet dog, which isn't classed as a dangerous breed, was removed from the home and humanely destroyed.

'We are in the early stages of our investigation. Our thoughts remain with her family at this devastating time.'

Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance was also scrambled to the scene.

Some 16 people died as a result of dog attacks in the first nine months of 2023, according to the Office for National Statistics.

femail MAGAZINE

JENNI MURRAY
Was I wrong to hide my true accent?
PAGE 35

Forget splashing out on summer clothes, I spent £2,000 on a holiday face

And you'll never guess what I'm having done next!

by Amanda Platell

DEEP crow's feet, frown lines criss-crossing my forehead, a horribly creased top lip line, crinkled neck and lifeless pallid skin. Sixty-six? My reflection in the mirror, as I contemplated what to pack for my big summer holiday, looked more like 166.

But perhaps that's no surprise when, after 27 years of indulging in 'tweakments' to keep my face looking its best, I'd neglected them entirely for almost 18 months. I'd had such high hopes for 2024, promising myself more 'me' time, joining a painting class, walking the Camino de Santiago trail in north-west Spain and, of course, catching up on facial maintenance.

Sadly, though, it quickly turned into an

TURN TO NEXT PAGE

Picture: LEZLI+ROSE. Hair and make-up: DESMOND GRUNDY. Stylist: CAMILLA RIDLEY-DAY

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

annus horribilis when my dear friend Gary fell seriously ill and all my plans were dashed. Four months of hospital visits, followed by the funeral, and I was exhausted. No wonder my skin, then the least of my worries, had become lifeless and drawn.

Sadness, grief, tiredness, stress, they all show up first in your heart and then on your face.

I had kept promising myself I'd do something about it, but there was always something more pressing to do: sorting out Gary's affairs, getting his home ready so I could fulfil his wish to die at home.

It was at his funeral that the first kindly, well-intentioned comments came from friends. One said I looked 'exhausted', which as any woman knows means you look like hell. Another said surely I needed a break, as I looked worn out (sisterly code for haggard).

But, in the end, it was the looming thought of a planned trip to see my friends and family in Australia that made me realise I had to get a grip.

While I used to fly back to see my parents three or four times a year, since their deaths, 'home' no longer felt like home. I hadn't been back for five years. The last time I saw my oldest friends I was still in my late 50s. And a lot can change in half a decade.

What would everyone make of this once carefree woman, now sagging with sadness, every single second of her six decades of life seemingly etched on her face? Yes, I knew, deep down, they would love me however careworn I looked, but I wanted to be at my best for the reunion — if not for them, for me.

This is the point where many would console themselves with a super-sized shopping spree, stocking up on gorgeous summer clothes, splashing out a fortune on an uber-glamorous homecoming.

Once, I would have done the same. As my six bursting wardrobes full of expensive clothes attest, I've always loved beautiful outfits, shoes and handbags. I have enough designer clothes to sink the Titanic and ordinarily that wouldn't deter a pick-me-up summer splurge.

But this time I looked at my rails and shelves of exquisite garments and only felt dejected. What's the point of fabulous new dresses if your face and neck look saggy, crinkly, dull and old?

And so at the very last minute — barely more than a week before my holiday — I decided I simply couldn't face the folks back home in my current state. My holiday must-have wasn't a suitcase full of new clothes, but a complete facial overhaul.

I booked in with Lee Garrett, a fully qualified aesthetic nurse practitioner with 24 years' experience and a Harley Street clinic.

I soon realised, from the bemused look on Lee's face, just how drastically my own had changed since I had seen him last.

'There's only so much we can do before you fly,' he said tactfully, before assuring me he could still make a big difference.

He set about some serious injecting... Botox in my upper face, including my forehead, my crow's feet, frown lines, and more in the lines in my neck; dermafiller in my very wrinkled upper lip — not to give me a Love Island pout but to banish the so-called barcode lines — and Profhilo, a hyaluronic acid treatment, to improve skin tone and texture and hydrate.

Normally it would be done across two sessions, but time was of the essence so I went for the lot in one go.

The cost? In total, around £2,000. While some may gasp at such extravagance, I reasoned I'd forgone the cost of my holiday wardrobe to pay for it.

And it was really just an enhanced version of something many of my mid-life friends, all successful career women, are doing this year: tweaking their faces, lips and necks in time for summer, with its parties, reunions and ever-present cameras. The difference is they just don't tell anyone.

We all agree that we've plenty of fab outfits — but who sees the frock when your face is a rocky horror show? Better, I think, to be realistic and spend your money on something that can actually make a difference.

These days, it's fashionable to agonise over whether we 'should' have tweakments or stay 'natural'.

While I have the utmost respect for ladies who age gracefully without any tweakments, I am not, nor do I ever intend to be, one of them.

But unlike the millions of women, including almost every celebrity on TV and in movies, who claim they've 'never had anything done', I've always been honest about it — with myself, with friends and with readers.

After all, my face is one thing I can change. So why not? My friends and I, when we lament the passing years, make sure never to say, 'Now we're getting older...'. Instead we use the phrase, 'Well, we're not 40 any more...'

But however much we hate to admit it, once we reach our mid-60s, our bodies just aren't what they were, and no amount of time spent at the gym or starving ourselves on silly diets will change that.

Packing for a summer holiday when I was younger meant buying a few new bikinis, a couple of sarongs, a slinky strapless dress for the evenings and some designer sandals.

I used to love a pair of my favourite Levi's denim shorts in a 28in waist, too, but my midriff has sadly caught up with the years — I'm now more 30in. That's despite being relatively fit due to regular boxing and weight training.

Of course, there are two camps in the army of sixtysomething women fighting an active campaign against ageing. Those of us, like myself, who focus on our faces — and those who are trying new ways to lose weight from their bodies.

I'm simply not one for body procedures like fat freezing — yes, it's a quick fix, but it's far better to eat less fat. And although I have a number of friends who've been on weight-loss drug Wegovy for months — and the results *are* remarkable — it's not for me either.

That made rummaging through my hitherto go-to holiday wardrobe a depressing experience, particularly when I found that some of the zips no longer did up.

The elasticised 'control' panel of my eye-wateringly expensive Rigby & Peller designer swimsuit — bought a few years ago promising to flatten my tummy and give me Marilyn Monroe bosoms — has perished, leaving me looking saggy and six months pregnant.

Within days I could see my face lifting and de-creasing

Trying on a beautiful pale green Ghost dress that was once a holiday essential is suddenly a disaster in the full-length mirror. The drapes sit awkwardly over a more fulsome body, the skinny straps revealing many women's biggest nightmare: batwing arms.

As for my favourite designer sandals, all I can see is 60-year-old bunions — the price for wearing high-heels all my life.

Oh, the irony; all the things we did in our youth to be beautiful — wearing stilettos, sunbathing — have come back to haunt our faces and bodies. To the extent that, today, I would never entertain the idea of having that hell of all hells, a beach holiday.

While I am in awe of women my age with perfect 'bikini bodies', I am not one of them. Looking sensationally sexy on the beach is a dream beyond most of us past 60.

And dare I even mention the midlife decolletage dilemma? It's the part of a woman's body we most forget because in England we're covered up for 11 months of the year. Then summer arrives and you suddenly discover your cleavage is as dried-up as a Saharan riverbed.

Better to ignore the body altogether — and thank God there are other things that can be done.

Enter Lee and his tweakments, the most extensive I've ever had done, especially all in one go: Botox to the upper face, forehead, frown lines and crow's feet (£470); Botox in the neck (£370); dermal filler to the upper lip (£580) and Profhilo

'Just last week my hot window cleaner asked me out on a date (at 66). I have £840 of Botox to thank for that ego boost...'

AFTER

BEFORE

Fresh-faced: Amanda all set for summer and (above) before her tweakments

Picture: LEZLI+ROSE/Hair and make-up: DESMOND GRUNDY/Stylist: CAMILA RIDLEY-DAY

to rehydrate and improve skin tone (£450).

Was it painful? A little but not horribly. The needles do sting but only as they go in, a bit like a mosquito bite.

The results? Excellent.

Within days I could see my face lifting, de-creasing, the crow's feet melting away — and the improvements continued over the coming days. I was left with not a frown in sight and a more natural glow to my formerly grey skin.

As for clothes, I packed light, allowing my new youthful appearance to do the talking. I opted for a few white T-shirts, a two-year-old Stella Nova orange print dress, an ancient Seafolly monochrome one-piece swimsuit, some sarongs and a light Max Mara cashmere coat for the chillier evenings, among others.

Then it was time for the acid test, when I arrived back in Australia at the end of last month. Even after a 20-hour flight, the first thing one of my girlfriends of 50-plus years said was: 'Mandy, you haven't aged a bit!'

Later came the ultimate compliment: in a hushed tone, she asked delicately if I'd 'had any work done' and if so what, in detail, so she could have it, too.

And the praise continued. So many old pals commented on how young and happy I looked. Friends' wives, more discreetly, asked if I'd had any tweakments.

Suffice to say the holiday was one of the happiest I've had in my entire life. Family reunions full of joy after so long; endless barbecues and home-made pizza nights in the back garden.

I'm not ashamed to admit that looking 166 after such a torrid year had affected my mood — and I'm not sad I resorted to cosmetic enhancements, just glad that they exist.

I had felt so worried that my old friends would greet a shadow of my former self, but the tweakments saved the day. They gave me such a boost, a sense of confidence that made me ready to greet the world again.

So I have no regrets. I know I look younger than I should.

When I first became a journalist, my mum said: 'Oh, Mandy, it's such a tough life: you'll end up smoking, drinking and divorced.' And I've been guilty of all three.

Yet just last week the hot 44-year-old window cleaner said he couldn't believe I was 66 — and asked whether I would go on a date with him. Was he just looking for a bigger tip? Either way, I have Botox to thank for the ego boost.

And I've decided to go even further, now that I'm back from my holiday, with longer-term tweakments later in the year.

Here's what I'm saving up for next: BBL (broad band light), which feels like mini whip lashes and removes red broken veins and skin pigmentation.

This would be combined with Moxi, an ablative laser that rejuvenates the skin and removes old sun damage, polishes and tightens. Three sessions of these six weeks apart will set me back £2,450.

Next the new must-have regenerative treatment, polynucleotide injections. Used medically since 1978 mainly for wound healing, they are now used in aesthetics to correct damaged, ageing skin around the eyes, face, neck and body. They improve collagen and hyaluronic acid in your skin and the cost for four sessions would be £1,800.

So many friends said how young and happy I looked

And not forgetting ultherapy, a procedure that emits ultrasound waves to penetrate the skin's surface to the deeper dermal structures, stimulating collagen. Costing £3,650 for one session, this would be used on the jaw to get my jawline back and on the neck to tighten and remove lines.

That's another £7,900. Yes, it's a lot of money, but it's a decision any woman of a certain age has to make for herself. Of course I don't have to have it all, just what I really, really need.

After all, who can put a price on a beaming holiday smile — or the self-confidence and ease that lie behind it?

PODCAST PICK

THE BEST AUDIO SHOW TO LISTEN TO NOW

EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT ME STORMY DANIELS

EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT ME

THE Mail's hit podcast returns for a third series. Over five episodes, Stormy Daniels — the woman who was paid hush-money before the 2016 U.S. election and who may have derailed Donald Trump's new bid for the presidency — shares stories from her childhood, the adult entertainment industry and that fateful night in Nevada.

■ *AVAILABLE on Apple Podcasts and Spotify*

Am I wrong to have coaxed my vegan grandchildren into eating sausages and chicken?

by Anonymous

A FEW days ago, my granddaughter Molly made a confession as I walked her home from school. Giving me a sheepish look, she confided, 'Grandma, I tried a chicken nugget yesterday!'

She's 13, so you may think this is unremarkable, but to me the news was seismic. Because Molly has been vegan since the age of six, a decision made by my eldest daughter, Nicky, that I thoroughly disagree with.

I asked Molly what she thought of her first taste of meat for seven years — the only one she has any memory of — and she said it was 'quite nice'.

I had to hide my euphoric grin. I can't say this openly, but I long for my grandchildren to quit their vegan diet, which is tearing our family apart and, I'm sure, damaging their health.

I've even resorted to deliberately trying to coax them into eating meat.

Can you blame me? Catering for their diet has become hellish, especially since I do school pick-up and cook their tea twice a week.

Nicky's other child, Theo, has been vegan since he was born seven years ago, and is now an outspoken mini activist. If I take him to the supermarket, he'll loudly refuse to go down 'the dead animal aisle' when I need to buy meat.

I've attempted to tell him it's normal to eat meat. Once, the supermarket was offering free mini chicken-bite tasters, and I tried to get him to have a little bit, but he was having none of it.

The children's veganism doesn't stop at food: it extends to hair products, moisturisers, shoes, clothes, bags — you name it. The one exception to my daughter's strict rules is that she will agree to them taking medicines that contain animal products or have been tested on animals.

Sleepovers have long been problematic as I have to check everything Molly and Theo eat and drink, and also whip out the vegan soap and shampoo which I keep in a cupboard for them.

I scrutinise every single label on food and toiletries, which is time-consuming and exhausting. But spending time with them is so important to me, I don't dare refuse to go through with this palaver.

If I ask Theo, 'Do you want to try a sausage, I won't tell Mummy?' he looks at me in horror and gives a very firm 'no'.

It would be easy to sneak some animal produce into his diet to see if he noticed, but I couldn't bring myself to break his trust. My goodness, it's tempting sometimes though.

I can't even speak freely around him. If I ask the grown-ups who wants 'normal' milk and who wants oat milk, when I'm making a round of coffees, Theo gets huffy and will tell me off: 'Why are you saying it's "normal" when it's from a baby cow?'

And it's not just the children making a storm in a coffee cup.

When my husband Mike, a devout carnivore, started grilling sausages and chicken at a family barbecue last weekend, the vegans in our troop — Nicky, 37, our other daughter Maisie, 27, Molly and Theo — complained loudly about the smell of 'dead animals cooking' and huffed indoors to the kitchen, slamming the door behind them.

As always, I was caught in the middle, surveying the wreckage of our precious time together.

So, how did our once-calm family become a fractious, unpredictable battleground? It all began in 2011 when Nicky was pregnant with Molly. She watched a TV documentary about animal welfare and went from roast beef lover to staunch vegan overnight.

We hoped it was just a phase, but when she arrived at our house with new pots and pans for me that animals 'must not be cooked in', and demanded I use them to make meals for her, I realised she was serious.

Being a medic (I now lecture in obstetrics) I'd been worried about her decision to go vegan from day one, mostly for health reasons.

When Molly was born, Nicky reassured us that she'd raise her on animal products and allow her to make her own choices about veganism when she was older.

That said, I recall her telling the health visitor that even if her breast milk ran low, nothing would persuade her to use formula, as it usually has cow's milk in it.

During pregnancy she'd had low iron levels, which is a health risk often associated with veganism. I worried Molly might also go on to become anaemic, but when I mentioned it to Nicky I was met with, 'She's my baby!'

By the time Nicky gave birth to Theo, she was a solo mum and decided she didn't want the hassle and expense of preparing different meals.

She asked Molly, then six, 'do you want to be vegan like me?' to which Molly, not understanding anything about veganism, said, 'Oh, yes please, Mummy!'

That doesn't feel fair on Molly to me, but whenever I've raised my concerns with Nicky, she just dismisses them.

Meanwhile, our younger daughter Maisie decided a few years ago to become vegan.

We've always been such a close family, and we never used to argue the way we do now. I hate to row but I just feel so strongly that Nicky is making the wrong choice for her and her kids' health and Mike despairs of us having to pander to them.

Vegan food is also very expensive. With Maisie still living at home with us, her vegan additions to the food shop push the bill up by £20 a week, more if she's run out of toiletries.

Maisie also has a cat, which she now insists is vegan, but I felt so guilty watching the poor thing salivating when I was eating a tuna sandwich recently that I secretly let it eat the crusts.

My son Daniel, who's 33, and his wife dismiss his sisters' veganism as 'nonsense' and feed their toddler slices of tender steak.

Still, Molly's recent admission has given me cause for hope. She knew I'd support her choice, and she went on to confess that she's been quietly introducing animal products to her diet, including pizza with cheese.

Thankfully, Nicky appreciates that Molly's at an age where she's spending more time with her friends at weekends, and that this makes it harder for her to be vegan when they're tucking into ice-cream and fried chicken.

My main concern for all of them is still the health implications, with vegans commonly deficient in nutrients such as calcium, iron, and vitamins A and B12, as they can be tricky to derive from a diet which doesn't contain animal products.

Over the years, Nicky's had blood tests revealing vitamin B deficiency and she's suffered repeatedly with troublesome mouth ulcers. She now takes a vegan supplement and has consciously upped her intake of leafy green vegetables such as broccoli and spinach to boost her vitamin levels.

Meanwhile, Theo has always had an abnormally high number of colds, which Mike tells Nicky is because he's vegan, a comment that causes huge rows between them.

I've been concerned too that when Molly starts her periods and her iron levels fluctuate more she may become deficient.

For me, the greatest frustration is being stuck in the middle. Even going out for coffee with my daughters is a minefield because not everywhere offers vegan alternatives such as oat milk.

We've been to cafes, restaurants and tea rooms where we've sat down, read the menu, then had to get up and leave when the vegans start complaining.

Of course, I support all my children and grandchildren in the choices they make and I love them tremendously. But I long for the days before veganism muscled in like a disruptive relative, when family life was straightforward and everyone would fight good naturedly over the last slice of roast beef on a Sunday.

■ *NAMES have been changed.*

As told to SADIE NICHOLAS

Picture: GETTY POSED BY MODEL

My daughter insists even the cat follows a vegan diet

Food is now a battleground for our once-calm family

Jenni Murray

Ab Fab to have them back

WELCOME back, ladies, for a new TV documentary celebrating Absolutely Fabulous with Jane Horrocks as Bubble, Joanna Lumley as Patsy, Jennifer Saunders as Edina and Julia Sawalha as Saffy.

Sadly no June Whitfield as Mum. She will be much missed. I'll never forget watching the first episode prior to an interview with Jennifer — the one where Edina falls out of a taxi drunk after a night with Patsy.

There's a full ashtray on her bedside table. My son Ed, then aged nine, fell off the sofa laughing and said: 'Blimey Mum, did you and Sally [my closest friend] write this?'

Reunited: Jane Horrocks, Joanna Lumley, Jennifer Saunders and Julia Sawalha and (left) in the sitcom

Pictures: UKTV / ADAM LAWRENCE / PA WIRE / BBC PICTURE ARCHIVES / GETTY IMAGES / ISTOCKPHOTO

I hid my Northern accent to get ahead in my career but, by gum, I wish I hadn't

GROWING up, I felt lucky to have a mother who recognised what a drawback my Yorkshire accent would be and that it could prevent me from enjoying success in whatever field I chose. It was her life's work to prepare me to rise above my working-class roots.

She constantly lectured me about the way I must speak. Nicely was the word she used: 'Not like those young ruffians you try to play with on the street.'

She sent me for elocution lessons, or speech and drama as I prefer to call it, from the age of five to 18. I loved it and could fully understand why it was important not to speak the kind of 'Ee by gum' Yorkshire dialect that might make me incomprehensible to others.

But when I read this week that the young actress Olivia Cooke, starring in the Game Of Thrones' prequel House Of The Dragon, felt she had to get rid of her Northern accent in order to succeed, it made me think.

Did my generation of Northerners let down those who followed in our footsteps? Should we have showed pride in where we came from and insisted our accents did not indicate we were stupid?

SHOULD I have spoken in my original Yorkshire accent when I applied to the BBC in the 1970s? If I had, I doubt I would have been given the job which put me on the air.

But, all these decades on, surely things should have changed. Particularly considering broadcasters seem so keen to acknowledge that London is not the centre of the universe.

The BBC often broadcasts from Salford, Channel 4 from Leeds — and yet it's curious how many of the presenters in those regions stick with received pronunciation (RP).

Olivia Cooke is from Oldham, but has lived in the South for years. She has admitted she's 'really sad' about the fact that 'I do put on a voice when I'm speaking to someone with a different upbringing to me. I'm proud of where I come from, but it was a source of embarrassment because I didn't feel as intelligent as others . . . I do have a chip on my shoulder about being working class.'

Of course, it's essential for an actress to be able to change the way she speaks. In performance, your voice and your accent are determined by the part you are to play and must range from American to Welsh to Scottish to hardcore Northern when necessary. But that should not be the case in conversation with friends, or, more importantly, people who might be in a position to hire you.

I have noticed that some accents seem to be less acceptable than others. Not only the Yorkshire of my youth and Olivia's in Oldham but also Birmingham.

Irish, on the other hand, has never been seen as anything but lyrical and poetic. Terry Wogan is a prime example of someone whose accent made, rather than destroyed, him. Newcastle seems to be acceptable as long as it's not too broad. Maybe the popularity of the presenters Ant and Dec contributed to it being seen as the sound of the charming cheeky chappie.

Meanwhile, Sarah Smith, the BBC's North America editor, has a perfectly acceptable Scottish accent which she makes no effort to disguise and Huw Edwards lasted for years as the BBC's leading newsreader with his Welsh lilt.

There have been times — and I can only put this down to Beatlemania — when Liverpudlian became the most envied accent and could be heard everywhere.

But Yorkshire, Birmingham, Lancashire and Greater Manchester continue to be a rarity. The BBC's political editor, Chris Mason, gets away with the slightest hint of North Yorkshire. Sara Cox, from Bolton, has a mere soupcon of her natural speech patterns.

I'm ashamed to say I find it a bit of a shock when I hear Johny Pitts, with a very strong Sheffield accent, presenting Radio 4's Open Book. He's an excellent presenter with an intelligent interviewing style. Why then does it make me jump every time I hear my own natural accent jumping out of the radio? It can only be because it's so rare.

It's time these prejudices changed. The most depressing complaint Olivia Cooke made was how being working class is preventing many young people getting jobs as actors.

She says it's an exclusive industry and points to the fact that the arts are not funded in state schools. It's not just accents then. It's missing out on drama classes which 'help kids grow in confidence and feel accepted'.

I KNOW my years of learning how to speak and perform in public, whether with my teacher Miss Firth or in drama at school, gave me the confidence to spend the majority of my adult life sitting in front of a microphone broadcasting to the nation.

Only one fear dominated those day-to-day performances: the word 'bus'. I never wrote it into a script, terrified I would reveal my Yorkshireness by letting it slip out with a broad U sound.

It's all ridiculous. We are a country of many accents, each as important as any other. The only thing that matters is clarity, no matter the accent. Looking back, I regret I didn't have the courage to be the proud Yorkshire woman I am and let people hear my true voice. Maybe I would have paved the way for Olivia and her like.

I used to love the sun, now I dread it

I USED to love the sun and would spend hours getting a tan covered in nothing but olive oil. No more.

After Michael Mosley's tragic death — and those of several other tourists who died while out in southern Europe's ongoing heatwave — we all have to be aware of the danger of heatstroke.

Only a couple of weeks ago, on a rare sunny day, I felt sick and faint at lunch. I was hot and the family diagnosed heatstroke.

It seems it can strike at any age and clearly not only in the burning heat of Greece. There's a heatwave coming here next week. Take care.

■ *A CARE home in Suffolk has asked residents or their families to state what forms of endearment they're happy with. I would say a firm no to 'darling' or 'sweetheart'. 'Dear' makes me feel ancient, but I wouldn't have survived long in Yorkshire if I objected to 'love'.*

by Clive Taylor

RECENTLY I went on a second date with a woman I found seriously attractive. Tall, slim and blonde — and a partner in a law firm, meaning she was both intelligent and solvent.

She was also the mother of two teenage boys, which at the time I didn't think twice about. I've got two girls myself, aged 23 and 22.

I planned our Saturday together carefully. A country drive and a romantic pub lunch, with plenty of time to get to know each other. It goes without saying that I'd pick up the bill for everything, probably well into three figures, as well as buying her flowers to mark the occasion.

And, yes, I imagined that if things went well we might end the day at mine, getting to know each other in a different way. My hopes were quickly disappointed. The evening before we were due to meet, she texted to say our leisurely drive would now include a plus one.

Her eldest needed a lift to his Saturday job at a garden centre.

When we dropped him off, there was no 'thank you', just a 'see you guys this afternoon'. Afternoon?

It turns out his mother had promised we'd be back at 3pm to pick him up.

Our day together was downsized to a quick bite to eat, with my date all too obviously watching the clock. After playing dad taxi for the day, I decided not to ask for a third date. She wanted to be a good mum, and I respect that.

But I've been there and done that with my own two daughters, and now 59, I'm at that selfish stage of my life.

I want to be the priority — and that's why I've decided I'll never again date a woman with children under 16.

I know this won't be a popular opinion. But in the eight years I've been single, since splitting from the mother of my two daughters in 2016, I've learned that dating women with children just causes more havoc than it's worth.

And however incendiary my views might seem, I'm certainly not alone. Recently, research from dating app Even revealed that one in six single Brits would not be open to dating a single parent because they might come with emotional baggage and messy relationships with their ex.

Many singletons also say they're not ready to take on the caring responsibilities associated with dating a single parent — and I'm with them on that, too.

YOU might ask what makes me think single mothers are queuing up to date me anyway — I'm nudging 60 after all — but I know I'm a bit of a catch.

I'm tall and keep myself trim thanks to my love of extreme white-water kayaking. Every spring I head to the Alps to kayak the snow melt — you need a strong core and decent upper body strength.

Professionally, I own a publishing company. I have my main home in the Cotswolds as well as a cottage on Exmoor. I earn a decent salary, just shy of six figures, and I've worked hard for it.

When I first started online dating eight years ago, I never dreamed of filtering out women with children. After a string of disasters and disappointments, I can now see how very naive I was.

Many failed at the first date stage, like the woman who talked constantly about her son's exam grades and homework, or the one who kept pulling the conversation back to her custody issues and problems with the childminder.

I want to hear about the woman sitting in front of me, not the mum she turns into when she gets home.

Another problem is endlessly having to organise around the children's lives. Believe me, showing up late for a date because you are driving your young son around his paper round does not scream 'gosh, I fancy you and want to have sex with you'.

But these issues are child's play compared to what happens when things get more serious.

One woman I dated, and genuinely liked, had an 11-year-old daughter. When I was finally invited round for a cosy evening in, needless to say I hoped it might turn into something more.

We settled on the sofa with a glass of wine to watch a romantic film, my arm around my date's shoulder. Then the living room door flew open, and without asking, the daughter plonked herself down next to her mother.

Each time I attempted to touch my date's hand or thigh, the daughter sparked up a running commentary. 'Mum, he's touching your thigh!' or 'Ugh, Mum, Clive's got his arm around you.' It felt like I was in an Attenborough wildlife documentary. My date's half-hearted 'sit down and be quiet' had zero impact. In fairness, she did try. But the evening was a disaster and, halfway through the film, I cut loose and left.

Then there was another woman, let's call her Lexie, who had a ten-year-old daughter.

Lexie seemed perfect: in her late 40s with a lovely figure and a great sense of fun.

When she invited me on holiday with them after just a few weeks of chatting online, I readily agreed.

But small things quickly started to go wrong. Within the first 24 hours the keys to my hire car went missing, a few days later my passport was mysteriously found in the recycling bin.

It was as clear as day to me that her daughter was jealous of our relationship.

My new girlfriend wrote the incidents off as childish mischief, telling me to ignore them.

I tried to do so — until the day, a couple of months in, when I invited Lexie (who naturally arrived with her daughter in tow) to stay in my beautiful Cotswolds cottage.

I took them out on a sightseeing trip for the day, not realising the little girl had left the shower attachment lying on the floor, still running.

We returned home to find my bathroom in the kitchen. The water had destroyed the floor and the entire bathroom had come crashing down through the ceiling.

Outraged, I told them both to go before the daughter destroyed the rest of my home. On reflection, the mum had been single for a while, and no wonder. After that, I told myself I'd only date mothers of teenagers. But older children bring their own problems.

Take the time I invited the woman I'd been seeing, and her teenage daughters, to spend a weekend at my home and meet my own girls.

My daughters were horrified to have to discreetly point out to me that the children were smoking joints in my garden. I'm a clean-living guy and very anti-drugs, so that ended that relationship.

These days, I am firmly in the same camp as Sex And The City creator Candace Bushnell, who last year said in an interview that she doesn't think single mothers should date while their children are at home.

SHE said: 'There's a big difference between somebody who's 40 and somebody who's 55 and is post-menopausal and their kids are grown and moved out.

'If you're in your 40s, single and with kids at home, I don't think dating is a good idea.

'Instead, I think it's about taking care of yourself and understanding that you're responsible for your own happiness.

'It's not about falling into this myth of an idea that a relationship will make your life work.'

Hear, hear.

Sex And The City was great fun. But the characters I adore, Samantha Jones and Carrie Bradshaw, were independent with no strings attached. Whereas women with dependants will always need to put them first. And while I'd do anything for my own daughters, looking after someone else's is a very different proposition.

I met my ex at a tennis club party when I was 30. We were together for 22 years, and when the girls came along I was hands on with everything from nappies and night feeds to being a fully paid-up

Clive says he's a catch who owns two homes and goes whitewater kayaking. But when it comes to love, he's sick of playing 'dad taxi', hearing about exams and having to fight for attention

Sorry, ladies — dating a woman with children is just more trouble than it's worth

Picture: LEZLI+ROSE. Male grooming: AMANDA CLARKE AT JOY GOODMAN

'taxi dad'. I played badminton with one daughter and went running with the other.

But their mother and I drifted apart, and when the girls were aged 16 and 15, we split up.

I'm afraid I quickly discovered that I was one of those guys who is not very good at being single.

I got a cat, but after a busy work day or weekend of kayaking I missed having someone to come home to.

Within a matter of months I joined a dating website. Because my ex had custody, I was able to keep dad duties and my love life very separate. I knew my daughters might resent a new woman in my life, and I was very careful who I introduced them to.

Some might point out that just like the single mothers of teens I believe shouldn't date, I was also a single parent of teens — and yet very keen to date.

As unfair as it sounds, because the children lived with their mother, I was free to date.

Yes, that sounds like there is one rule for men, and another for women. What can I say? Guilty as charged.

My eldest daughter is now 23 and studying to be a doctor, while the youngest is 22 and a marketing executive. I'm beyond proud that my daughters are mature, happy and well-balanced individuals.

But I know all too well that younger children can, at times, be a real handful. Yes, you love them, but that doesn't mean you always like their behaviour.

So why do women with full responsibility for young children bother to date at all?

There'll no doubt be an outcry but trust me when I say that many women with kids really do have their radar set for well-off men. Sometimes it's downright predatory. Far too often I've been asked, 'how much do you earn?' before we've even finished our first drink.

When I get together with male friends, we trade stories of our dating disasters and warn each other away from 'gold diggers' in the local area. We're all genuinely afraid of being taken to the cleaners by a woman we trust, or even love.

One colleague of mine met a woman with three children under 13. She was living in a housing association flat and utterly bamboozled my friend into marrying her. They were wed within a year and, what a surprise, married for just two.

THE divorce cost him a buy-to-let property, shares in his company and half his pension.

Then there was a friend who was seeing a woman with a 13-year-old who somehow managed to gain access to his bank account and withdrew thousands of pounds.

It caused him no end of grief having to extricate himself from the mother of a miniature criminal mastermind... who didn't take it too kindly when he called the police. My friend had been nothing but nice to the child, even playing tennis with them (and letting them win).

While some might see my comments as sexist, I'm willing to bet my Cotswolds cottage on the fact that most single men agree with me. The difference is they wouldn't dare say it out loud. So please don't shoot the messenger.

As for the future, I absolutely want to meet someone to take on holiday, to spoil and enjoy romantic meals with. But do I want to fork out for her *and* her offspring? No.

I realise how awful and shallow this makes me sound. But I really don't want to compete with a child for my partner's attention, or plan our fabulous holidays and romantic dinners around the needs of a young family.

I'd like to be my partner's priority, and I'd make her the centre of my world in return.

So I'm still looking for a woman who is solvent, tall, slim, preferably blonde, a good conversationalist... and yes, whose children have flown the nest.

INSTAGLAM

Picture: CARLOS ALVAREZ/GETTY IMAGES

QUEEN LETIZIA OF SPAIN

WE PICK the best-dressed on Instagram and show you how they do it...

Earrings, £19, **pia jewellery.com**

Trousers, £99, **phase-eight.com**

Blazer, £149, **phase-eight.com**

Top, £135, **tedbaker.com**

Heels, £89.95, **gb.benetton.com**

KATHRYN WINTER

Does your husband still love you? Put him to the TikTok test

IN MY schooldays, my girl friends and I spent a high proportion of our time 'calculating' if this boy or that boy was going to be 'The One' with various arcane customs.

Like peeling your satsuma in one go, which allowed you to throw the peel over your shoulder and see what letter shape it fell into. I made the mistake of being mad about a boy called Harry. Forming an 'H' with the peel is unlikely, so that was that.

Today, this kind of obsessive hopefulness has found a new home on TikTok. But modern young women are putting their partners to the test in rather more practical ways.

I decided to put my husband of 26 years, who is the father of my two grown-up children, through the new romantic hoops. Read on to see how Anthony got on...

Picture: GETTY

THE ORANGE TEST

ASK your partner to peel an orange for you. If they do it without hesitation then they pass. If they complain, question it or refuse, the omens are not good.

My husband is a big fan of the morning grapefruit and I often sling in a request for a segment, so he's well-trained. But I make sure to ask when we are both deep in the Sunday papers. He gets up and does it unquestioningly. Boom, Cupid's arrow hits.

THE BECKHAM TEST

LAST year, David and Victoria Beckham, married for nearly 25 years, released their hit Netflix documentary. One clip of the couple dancing to Islands In The Stream by Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers went viral on TikTok. This, according to the internet, was peak 'couple goals'.

To find out if your partnership matches up to the Beckhams', put on the song and start dancing. If your partner joins in, you pass.

I make sure to put Islands In The Stream on in that slightly flirty hour my husband and I have in the kitchen, when I prepare supper and he mixes a drink and feeds the dogs. I press play.

'What the hell is this music?' he grimaces. 'Can't you put something decent on?' Total fail.

Next day, I choose one of his favourites, Gypsies, Tramps & Thieves by Cher, and, sure enough, he responds to my swaying overtures by dancing with me. I'm chalking it up as a victory.

THE BIRD TEST

THIS one examines how your partner reacts to you talking about something seemingly insignificant, like a bird outside your window. Relationship gurus at the Gottman Institute in America set great store by these 'bids for connection', because if your partner responds with genuine curiosity, it's a sign that they are hardwired to connect with you at any level.

'Look, the robin is back!' I trill, gesturing at the garden. Anthony responds immediately, coming up behind me. 'Really? Where? Wow! Has he gone through his moult yet?' I flutter my hands weakly, to indicate that the bird has flown.

I have a nagging feeling the bird test shouldn't result in that much excitement — but, hey, we passed.

THE STRAWBERRY TEST

THIS test involves asking your partner innocuous questions about a fantasy scenario. Their answers give an insight into the stability of your relationship. So:

1. Picture a field of strawberries behind a fence. You're hungry. How high is the fence?
2. You go into the field and steal berries. How many do you eat?
3. A farmer appears and starts shouting. What do you say?
4. How did the berries taste and how did you feel stealing them?

The height of the fence your partner pictures symbolises their self-control — the higher the fence, the higher their level of resistance to sexual temptation.

The number of berries eaten is the amount of people they can see themselves in love with at one time. Their response to the farmer is the way they'd respond if they were caught cheating. And the way they felt afterwards is how they'd feel about the affair.

At a dinner party, a few glasses of wine in, I announce that we're playing a game. 'Anthony, you start. You're on a walk...'

He passes with flying colours. He chooses a 6ft fence, eats only four strawberries, and apologises to the farmer for succumbing to temptation, expressing regret for his weakness — it all means he is unlikely to stray and will be honest if he does. I feel slightly smug.

But I do worry for my friends Kay and Xander, since Kay's response was to imagine an ankle-high fence and swiping 'as many strawberries as I can eat', which indicates wild infidelity and zero regrets...

SUSANNAH JOWITT

Hat, £109, **phase-eight.com**; blouse, £225, and skirt, £285, both **lisou.co.uk**; shoes, £225, **fairfaxandfavor.com**

Hat, £390, **stephenjonesmillinery.com**; blazer, £360, top, £114, and trousers, £230, all **essentiel-antwerp.com**

by Kate Wills

THE fashion pageant of Royal Ascot has always been a barometer, and inspiration, for summer event dressing at large.

And the hot tip from Ascot as the racing gets under way this week? Swap your showy dress for colourful, flowing, modern tailoring.

Leading the field is the race meeting's first-ever creative director, Daniel W. Fletcher, a unisex designer who has dressed both Harry Styles and The Crown star Emma Corrin.

He has delved into the Ascot archives to create a lookbook of timeless yet modern outfits for 2024, including brocade suits and crisp shirt dresses paired with ties.

'Dressing for occasion is something we seldom find the time to do nowadays,' says Fletcher, who has been a racegoer for many years and says he was 'a little daunted, but incredibly excited' when Royal Ascot approached him for the role.

Sharp suits continue to dominate the catwalk and the red carpet (worn by everyone from the Princess of Wales to Zendaya) so it makes sense that Fletcher would bring his signature shirts, shorts and jackets to the races.

Whether it's for Ascot, a wedding or any other event on the social calendar, summer's suiting is all about the playful details — padded shoulders, patch pockets or notch lapels.

Silhouettes are relaxed and flowing, verging on slouchy — think an undone double-breasted jacket or a curved flare on the trousers. Colours are pastel or brights; nothing too close to traditional workwear.

'Tailoring has always been a big part of Royal Ascot women's dressing,' Fletcher says. 'However, it's the dresses that often take

Hat, £49, **accessorize.com**; blazer, £499, and trousers, £299, both **hollandcooper.com**; shoes, £275, **russellandbromley.co.uk**

Hairband, £350, **mervebay indir.com**; belted blazer, £69, and trousers, £40, **riverisland.com**; shoes, £75, **monsoon.co.uk**

Hat, £250, **alexandraharper millinery.com**; dress, £175.20, **karenmillen.com**; shoes, £295, **russellandbromley.co.uk**

Hat, £1,500, **alexandra harper millinery.com**; blazer, £375, and trousers, £225, both **meandem.com**; shoes £255, **camilla elphick.com**; necklace, £23, **betty andbiddy.com**

Pictures: LEZLI+ROSE Styling: CAMILLA RIDLEY-DAY Fashion assistant: EMMA MESQUITA Hair and make-up: OOANAGH CONNOR at JOY GOODMAN Model: RAYANE at THE HIVE MANAGEMENT

Ascot's first creative director reveals...

How to win the style stakes in summer suiting

the spotlight because they are a little more flamboyant.'

To prove tailored pieces can be just as show-stopping, he took inspiration from royal visitors to Ascot.

'Some of my favourite women's looks when I was researching for the lookbook were the royals in the 1980s, wearing brightly coloured jackets with big shoulders and nipped-in waists.'

Princess Diana's postbox-red waistcoat and striped pussy-bow blouse in 1981 would still turn heads today. This fuchsia blouse and skirt from Lisou (far left) is a modern take on the look.

Likewise, her oversized double-breasted powder pink and purple skirt suit, worn in 1990, was similar to the baggy pastel tailoring at Stella McCartney and 16Arlington this season.

An oversized blazer and trousers from Essentiel Antwerp (second from left) or the double-breasted suit from race-day favourite Holland Cooper (third from left) offer a similar feel.

You don't have to wear trousers to nail the tailoring trend, however. Queen Elizabeth II was the master of bright periwinkle and mint green skirt suits — and this toothpaste green, tailored Karen Millen dress (second from right) is a good alternative.

And after the jumpsuit was officially accepted into the Royal Enclosure dress code in 2017, Sophie, Countess of Wessex, made strides in a blue belted full-length version.

'I've loved seeing the development of women's tailoring at Royal Ascot,' adds Fletcher. 'I hope it's allowed everyone to feel more comfortable to find a look that suits them.'

HE POINTS out that a great suit will be far more versatile than a statement dress you wear only once. It doesn't have to be expensive, either. This belted blazer (£69) and trousers (£40) from River Island (third from right) is an affordable way to try the tailoring trend.

Fletcher's top tip for turning a High-Street buy into something that looks seriously high-end is to buy big — and then get it tailored.

'My advice for anyone is to make sure your suit truly fits,' he says. 'While not everyone is going to be heading to Savile Row for a bespoke suit, having your trousers hemmed to the correct length or sleeves taken up a notch to reveal a sliver of shirt sleeve on your High Street or vintage suit will make all the difference in elevating your tailored look.'

A silk blouse, high-necked sleeveless shell top or camisole underneath a jacket will keep the look elegant and formal.

Opt for strong colours, such as this gold blazer and trousers from Me+Em (above), and padded shoulders or a peaked lapel to suggest more party, less 9-5.

'Opt for a fabric without too much texture that won't age quickly. This will allow it to be paired with different under-layers,' says Fletcher.

'I love a suit that I can wear with a shirt when going to an event, but then throw on with a T-shirt and trainers for lunch.'

So, where will the trend for women's tailoring end?

'Ascot style is ever evolving,' says Fletcher. 'With tailoring becoming more androgynous, I'd love to see women trying out the morning-coat look.'

Top hats optional.

Blind Date

'I don't normally like mullets — but his really suits him'

'I didn't intend to flirt, but I did find her very attractive'

Pictures: BEN LISTER. Hair and make-up: JULIE READ AT CAROL HAYES

MEERA, 24

VITAL STATISTICS
SINGLE, no long-term relationships.

CURRENT ROLE
WINE marketing.

WOULD LIKE TO MEET…
SOMEONE who is passionate about the world. Ideally, they would be driven by happiness — and not by money.

DATING PAST?
I'VE been single for so long. Almost all of my dating has been through apps, which has resulted in a string of five 'situationships', the longest of which lasted ten months.

PRE-DATE NERVES?
YES — and, as a result, I'm always early for dates. Waiting for Andrew only added to my nerves. I wore a long red dress, so at least I felt good about myself.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS?
THE first thing I noticed was his mullet — normally I don't like them, but it suited him. It was awkward when I stood up to greet him and got stuck behind the table, but he was smooth and leaned in to introduce himself. He has nice blue eyes and was super smiley.

EASY TO TALK TO?
ANDREW is so funny, he made the date an absolute pleasure. I was interested to hear about his Irish background, and we discovered we had both lived in Birmingham, so we compared notes. We also chatted about past relationships.

Although he's into sailing and kayaking, which I'm not, we have the same adventurous spirit. We were so engrossed talking, we were both late to see friends afterwards.

EMBARRASSING MOMENTS?
I KNOCKED over a bowl of rice. Thankfully, it was almost empty and didn't smash, but it was still so loud that everyone in the restaurant looked at us. Andrew, though, didn't care at all and calmed me down.

DID SPARKS FLY?
I AM usually quite flirty, but I think because it was a blind date, we both felt a bit tentative to flirt. Instead, we focused on getting to know each other, and enjoyed the nice vibe. There was lots of eye contact, and he is attractive, so we need a second date to work out if there's a genuine spark.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET AGAIN?
YES, we are both huge foodies so when he said he was going to try a new Japanese restaurant, it just felt natural to invite myself along. He asked for my contact details and we've been messaging. We got the train together and hugged goodbye with a 'see you soon'. I have a nice feeling about it.

WHAT DO YOU THINK HE THOUGHT OF YOU?
THAT I was really energetic and chatty, which we both were. I hope he thought I was engaged and interested in him.

WOULD YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS LIKE HIM?
I THINK so as he's funny and easygoing. He has the same energy as me, so he would get on well with my friends.

VERDICT: 8/10

LIKED? His sense of humour shone through.
REGRETS? I wish I hadn't spilled that bowl of rice.
COFFEE OR CAB? Coffee.

ANDREW, 27

VITAL STATISTICS
SINGLE for a year.

CURRENT ROLE
PR account manager in the tech industry.

WOULD LIKE TO MEET…
SOMEONE who is adventurous. I wouldn't be attracted to someone who couldn't step outside their comfort zone.

DATING PAST?
I'VE been single for a year. I have mostly had short, three-to-six month relationships, although my last relationship was for a year and a half.

PRE-DATE NERVES?
I HAD the attitude that if it's good, that's great, and if it's bad then it'll make a good story. I was open to it. I wore jeans with black boots and a white T-shirt and jacket.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS?
MEERA wasn't who I expected to meet at all. I had imagined someone less aligned to my views and values, so I was pleasantly surprised. She was vibrant and friendly with not an ounce of shyness about her. I also thought she had a lovely smile, beautiful eyes and her red dress was gorgeous.

EASY TO TALK TO?
SHE was so easy to talk to, the restaurant staff eventually had to move us off our table to the bar as they needed it for the next customers.

We chatted about our lives, the things we're passionate about, as well as what's happening in the world. We lightened it up, too, laughing about our exes. I also liked that she is so knowledgeable about food and wine.

She recommended I try the steak tartare (which I loved) and opened my eyes to trying some new things. If I hadn't made other plans after our meal, I would have stayed much longer.

EMBARRASSING MOMENTS?
NOT really. She was a bit embarrassed when she dropped her rice bowl, but we quickly laughed it off.

DID SPARKS FLY?
I THINK I was more nervous about flirting than I normally would be, until I was sure she was OK with it. I didn't come into the date with the hard intention of flirting, but I did find her very attractive. I'd certainly like to see her again.

At the end of the date, it felt natural to exchange contact details and equally natural to speak about when we'd meet up next.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET AGAIN?
DEFINITELY. She's an interesting woman with a strong outlook on the world, which I really enjoyed.

WHAT DO YOU THINK SHE THOUGHT OF YOU?
I HOPE she thought I was friendly and funny and had a positive take on life.

WOULD YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS LIKE HER?
ABSOLUTELY. She's warm, friendly and full of energy.

VERDICT: 9/10

LIKED? Her energy and great outlook on life.
REGRETS? That I had plans after our date.
COFFEE OR CAB? Coffee.

Interviews: ALANA KIRK

WOULD YOU LIKE US TO FIND YOU A DATE?

FANCY a posh meal with an eligible single like you? Or would you like to play cupid for someone else? Email your — or their — details and a photo to *blinddate@dailymail.co.uk*

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PUPPY PATIENTS

The Supervet: Noel Fitzpatrick, 8pm, Ch4

IN THIS puppy special we revisit the story of springer spaniel Poppy who, in 2016, was three months old and had twisted front legs. Owner Jo, who found Poppy abandoned in a garden, wasn't prepared to give up on the pup — and neither was Noel (pictured with Poppy). We also meet new patient Keira, a Border terrier with a front leg fracture; regular viewers will know that Noel's own beloved Border terrier was called Keira — his battle to save her life featured in a 2021 special — and puppy Keira's story really resonates with the Supervet.

PICK OF TODAY'S TV

GEORGE CLARKE'S AMAZING SPACES/ OUTRAGEOUS HOMES, 9PM/10PM, CH4

GEORGE CLARKE returns for a new, 12th series to kick off a double bill of shows about remarkable construction and design. As well as following the progress of ambitious self-builders, architect George will undertake his own project — here, he plans to turn an old industrial scissor lift into a 'floating' cabin. Throughout the series, he will be seeking out the best buildings Denmark has to offer — starting with a modern take on a Viking longhouse — and, in this episode, he catches up with a carpenter who turned a double-decker bus into a holiday retreat back in the second series. The bus was later destroyed in a fire, but its owner had a plan... At 10pm, Outrageous Homes begins a tour of Britain's boldest abodes, and who better to guide us than the master of maximalism, Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen (pictured)? No stranger to daring design, Laurence is in his element as he tours a house covered in mosaic, a cottage garden transformed into a Wild West ranch and a property built as a pirate-themed party barn for controversial publisher Felix Dennis. The barn has been turned into a cosy home — but how?

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast (HD)
9.30 Morning Live (HD) Hosted by Gethin Jones and Janette Manrara.
10.45 Scam Interceptors (HD) A woman is asked to hand over hundreds of pounds in gift cards to scammers.
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (AD,HD) Semi-detached houses in Stoke, Wirral and Gillingham.
12.15 Bargain Hunt (AD,R,HD) Eric Knowles presents the show from Heanor in Derbyshire.
1.00 BBC News at One; Weather (HD)
1.35 BBC Regional News; Weather (HD)
1.45 BBC News at One; Weather (HD)
2.00 Hope Street (AD,HD) Finn considers a life-changing decision.
2.45 Animal Park (AD,R,HD) The keepers welcome a new addition.
3.15 Escape to the Country (HD) Steve Brown helps a couple searching for a property in the Lake District.
4.00 MOTD Live: UEFA Euro 2024 (HD) Denmark v England (Kick-off 5pm). Coverage of the Group C match from Frankfurt Arena, as the two sides meet for the first time since their semi-final battle at Euro 2020.
7.30 BBC News at Six (HD) (Followed by Weather)
7.45 BBC Regional News (HD) (Followed by Weather)
8.00 Question Time Leaders' Special (HD) Fiona Bruce presents a two-hour leaders' special from York, with the Conservative Party's Rishi Sunak, Keir Starmer of the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats' Ed Davey and John Swinney of the Scottish National Party answering questions from the studio audience for 30 minutes each.
10.00 BBC News at Ten (HD)
10.30 BBC Regional News (HD) (Followed by Weather)
10.40 The Outlaws (AD,HD) Ben is left with a difficult choice when old feelings are rekindled.
11.40 Newscast (HD) BBC journalists including Laura Kuenssberg, Adam Fleming and Chris Mason host a round-up of events from the General Election campaign.
12.10 Rebus (AD,R,HD) Rebus faces difficult questions. **12.55** Euro 2024 Match Replay (HD) Denmark v England. Another chance to see the Group C match, with commentary by Guy Mowbray and Alan Shearer. **2.35** Weather for the Week Ahead (HD) **2.40** BBC News (HD)

BBC2

6.30 Scam Interceptors (R,HD)
7.00 Scam Interceptors (R,HD)
7.30 Clive Myrie's Caribbean Adventure (R,HD)
8.00 Gardeners' World (AD,BSL,R,HD)
9.00 BBC News (HD)
12.15 Politics Live (HD)
1.00 Tennis: Queen's (HD) The cinch Championships. Clare Balding presents coverage of day four of the men's grass-court tournament at Queen's Club, featuring matches from the second round. British wild card Ryan Peniston was eliminated at this stage last year, losing 6-3, 6-4 to second seed Holger Rune of Denmark. Another of the highest-ranked seeds was defeated though, with third seed Taylor Fritz of America losing 6-4, 7-6 to Frenchman Adrian Mannarino.
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games (R,HD) With Jasmine Harman, Dave Johns, Suzannah Lipscomb and Jason Mohammad.
6.30 Robson Green's Weekend Escapes (AD,R,HD) The actor is joined by his uncle and nephew.
7.00 The One Show (HD) Alex Jones and Vernon Kay present the live magazine show.
7.30 EastEnders (AD,HD) The money from Lola's fundraiser is stolen.
8.00 Inside the Factory XL: Diggers (AD,R,HD) Gregg Wallace and Cherry Healey get special access to a factory that makes as many as a hundred iconic yellow diggers every single day.
9.00 The Stormtrooper Scandal PICK (AD,HD) The story of London art curator Ben Moore and his controversial Art Wars NFT project — the sale of more than 1,100 Stormtrooper helmets.
10.30 Newsnight (HD) Analysis of the day's important news stories, with Kirsty Wark. (Followed by Weather)
11.05 MOTD: UEFA Euro 2024 Highlights (HD) The latest action from Germany, featuring Denmark v England and Slovenia v Serbia in Group C, and Spain v Italy in Group B.
12.05 Springwatch (BSL,R,HD) Iolo Williams heads to Hengistbury Head. **1.05** Doctor Who (AD,BSL,R,HD) Part one of the two-part finale. **1.50** Lost Boys and Fairies (AD,BSL,R,HD) **2.50** On Thin Ice: Putin vs Greenpeace (AD,BSL,R,HD) **3.20** This Is BBC2 (HD)

ITV1

6.00 Good Morning Britain (HD)
9.00 Lorraine (HD)
10.00 This Morning (HD) Daily magazine, featuring a mix of celebrity chat, showbusiness news, lifestyle features, topical discussion, health and beauty advice and more.
12.30 News; Weather (HD)
12.50 Regional News; Weather (HD)
1.00 Live UEFA Euro 2024 (HD) Slovenia v Serbia (Kick-off 2pm). Laura Woods presents coverage of the Group C match from Munich Football Arena. With analysis from Eni Aluko, Joleon Lescott and Danny Rohl, and commentary by Pien Meulensteen and Lee Dixon.
4.15 ITV Racing Live: Royal Ascot (HD) Francesca Cumani and Ed Chamberlin present further coverage of the third day of the meeting, including feature the 4.25 Gold Cup, plus races at 5.05 and 5.40. Coverage continues on ITV4.
6.00 Regional News; Weather (HD)
6.20 Party Election Broadcast (HD) By the Reform UK.
6.30 News; Weather (HD)
7.15 Live UEFA Euro 2024 (HD) Spain v Italy (Kick-off 8pm). Coverage of the Group B match from Arena AufSchalke in Gelsenkirchen, as both sides play their second group game of the campaign. Mark Pougatch presents, with analysis from Ian Wright, Roy Keane and Gary Neville, and commentary by Clive Tyldesley and Ally McCoist.
10.30 News (HD) (Followed by Weather)
11.00 Regional News (HD) (Followed by Weather)
11.15 Emergency Nurses: A&E Stories (R,HD) The Norfolk and Norwich emergency nurses are faced with severed arteries and dislocated joints.
12.15 Made in Britain (AD,R,HD) **12.45** Shop on TV (HD) **3.00** Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace (AD,BSL,R,HD) **3.50** Unwind with ITV (HD) **5.05** Katie Piper's Breakfast Show (BSL,R,HD) With comedians Danny Wallace and Al Murray.

CHANNEL 4

6.25 Cheers (R,HD)
6.50 Cheers (R,HD)
7.15 Everybody Loves Raymond (AD,R,HD) Four episodes.
9.05 Frasier (AD,R,HD)
9.35 Frasier (AD,R,HD)
10.05 Frasier (AD,R,HD)
10.35 Frasier (AD,R,HD)
11.05 Great Canal Journeys (R,HD) Timothy West and Prunella Scales explore Canada's Rideau Canal.
12.05 Channel 4 News Summary (HD)
12.10 Help! We Bought a Village (R,HD)
1.10 Car S.O.S (AD,R,HD) Restoring a 1967 Aston Martin DB6.
2.10 Countdown (HD) Greg Rusedski is in Dictionary Corner with Susie Dent.
3.00 A Place in the Sun (R,HD) A holiday home on the Greek island of Crete.
4.00 A Place in the Sun (R,HD) Lee Juggurnauth is on the Costa Blanca.
5.00 Sun, Sea and Selling Houses (HD)
6.00 Four in a Bed (R,HD) Katie and Rosie host at Isabella's Yard in Stamford, Lincolnshire.
6.30 The Simpsons (AD,R) Bart goes cycling with Marge on her new tandem, only to be laughed at.
7.00 Channel 4 News (HD)
7.55 Party Election Broadcast (HD) By Plaid Cymru.
8.00 The Supervet: Noel Fitzpatrick PICK (AD,HD) A 'puppy special' recalling the amazing stories of some of the youngest, fluffiest animals for whom Noel has provided life-saving treatment since *The Supervet* began.
9.00 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces PICK (AD,HD) New series. George has the idea of turning a scissor lift into a cabin in the sky, and starts his Denmark trip with a visit to a modern take on the old Viking longhouse.
10.00 Outrageous Homes PICK (AD,HD) New series. Interior design expert Laurence Llewelyn-Bowen celebrates great British visionaries, cherished eccentrics and proud-to-be-different homeowners.
11.05 Celebrity Gogglebox (AD,BSL,R,HD) *The Piano*, *Bridgerton*, *Celebrity Bridge of Lies*, *UK's Strongest Man 2024*, *The World's Most Luxurious Retirement Homes* and *Scam Interceptors* are appraised.
12.05 24 Hours in A&E (AD,R,HD) **1.00** Super Surgeons: A Chance at Life (AD,BSL,R,HD) **1.55** Ramsay's 24 Hours to Hell and Back (AD,BSL,R,HD) **2.40** The Simpsons (AD,R) **3.05** FILM: Ladies Only (2021) (12) ◆ (HD,b/w) Documentary following passengers on female-only trains in Mumbai. **4.30** Grand Designs Australia (AD,BSL,R,HD) **5.20** Frasier (AD,R,HD) **5.45** Countdown (R,HD)

(R) Repeat. (HD) High Definition. (AD) Audio Description. (b/w) Not in colour. (BSL) British Sign Language.

■ Family viewing ● Generally suitable for all ◆ Caution recommended

ART RACKET

The Stormtrooper Scandal, 9pm, BBC2

THIS very modern tale will leave your jaw on the floor. In 2021, a collection of works based on the Stormtrooper helmets from Star Wars went up for sale; they sold out in seconds, making millions for curator Ben Moore (a 'posh boy chancer', according to one contributor). Buyers didn't purchase physical objects; NFTs, or non-fungible tokens, conferred ownership. The wheels started to fall off days later, when Damien Hirst pulled out; other big names followed suit, as they hadn't given consent.

FILM CHOICE

Godzilla: King Of The Monsters, 11.05pm, Ch5

THIS monster movie is gargantuan good fun, featuring not only Godzilla, but also Mothra (among others), who gets a grand entrance. Vera Farmiga (pictured) is one of the scientists with furrowed brows.

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! Brave Bunnies (R,HD) **6.05** Peppa Pig (AD,R,HD) **6.25** Pip and Posy (R,HD) **6.30** Odo (R,HD) **6.40** Tweedy & Fluff (HD) **6.45** Fireman Sam (R,HD) **6.55** Thomas & Friends: All Engines Go! (R,HD) **7.05** Peppa Pig (AD,R,HD) **7.15** Paw Patrol (R,HD) **7.30** Pip and Posy (R,HD) **7.35** The Adventures of Paddington (R,HD) **7.55** Milo (R,HD) **8.10** Paw Patrol (R,HD) **8.30** Peppa Pig (AD,R,HD) **8.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom (R,HD) **8.55** Meet the Experts (R,HD) **9.10** Milkshake! Story Den (R,HD)

9.15 Jeremy Vine (HD)

11.15 Storm Huntley (HD)

12.45 Friends (AD,R,HD)

1.40 5 News at Lunchtime (HD)

1.45 Home and Away (R,HD)

2.20 Set Up By My Lover (2021) (PG) ● FILM (HD) Drama, starring Camille Stopps and Anthony Grant.

4.00 Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun (R,HD) Following familiar faces and new characters living the dream in the Costa sun.

5.00 5 News (HD)

6.00 Party Election Broadcast (HD)

6.05 Police Interceptors (R,HD)

6.55 5 News Update (HD)

7.00 Escape to the Farm with Kate Humble (HD) The presenter takes a trip to the Scottish Highlands to see how deer are managed there.

7.55 5 News Update (HD)

8.00 Happy Campers: The Caravan Park (HD) On the south coast of Cornwall at Tencreek Holiday Park, newly arrived campers Jason and his family are tested by high winds and lashing rain.

9.00 Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts (HD) Cameras focus on Russell, an 83-year-old suffering abdominal pain, and Anthony, who is rushed in by his partner, Lisa, following an accident demolishing a bathroom.

10.00 Cold Call (R,HD) With nowhere else to turn and tensions rising, June and Kirk are pushed to breaking point. Drama, with Sally Lindsay. Last in series.

11.05 Godzilla: King of the Monsters (2019) (12) ◆ (HD) FILM CHOICE The Monarch agency face off against an army of creatures, including Godzilla, Mothra, Rodan and King Ghidorah. Fantasy, starring Vera Farmiga.

1.30 PlayOJO Live Casino Show (HD) **3.30** Call the Bailiffs: Time to Pay Up (R,HD) **4.20** Britain by Bike with Larry & George Lamb (R,HD) **5.05** Great Artists (R,HD) **5.30** Nick's Quest (BSL,R) **5.55** Entertainment News on 5 (R,HD)

▲ Particularly liable to offend

Yes, it's dated but this twisty murder mystery is a masterpiece of plotting

CHRISTOPHER STEVENS
LAST NIGHT'S TV

Presumed Innocent (AppleTV+) ★★★★☆

FALSELY accused of murder, jobless, sleeping on the sofa... The only way life could get any worse for lawyer Rusty Sabich is if Taylor Swift wrote a song about him.

And that's not impossible. Actor Jake Gyllenhaal, who plays Rusty in the legal thriller **Presumed Innocent**, is an ex-boyfriend of Ms Swift and rumoured to be the target of her 2012 break-up song All Too Well.

Based on a mega-selling novel by Scott Turow, this mini-series is a masterpiece of plotting. Each twist piles up another layer of incriminating evidence against Rusty, so that soon everyone is doubting his innocence: his wife, his children, his oldest friend, even the viewers.

The victim is his closest colleague in the Chicago prosecuting attorney's office, a single mother called Carolyn Polhemus. Rusty is assigned to the investigation, and neglects to tell police he was having an affair with her.

His wife, Barbara (Ruth Negga), knew about Rusty's infidelity — though not that he was still obsessed with Carolyn, to the point of stalking her.

SEAL OF APPROVAL OF THE NIGHT: The first Royal Warrant for Britain's snootiest supermarket was awarded in 1928 by Queen Mary, we learned on Waitrose: Trouble In The Aisles? (Ch5). The King's great-grandmother was a great fan of their honey soap... bubbles with a buzz.

The book was condensed into a Hollywood movie starring Harrison Ford in 1990 but this eight-part serial has far more time to build the tension and relish each fresh revelation, building to a cliffhanger at the end of each weekly episode.

Each one subverts what we think we know about Rusty, even when we think nothing else can surprise us. Shock one: Carolyn was pregnant with his baby. Shock two: he was with her on the night she died... and her son has video to prove it. Shock three: Rusty's own teenage son was also outside the house that night.

All this disguises the basic fact that Presumed Innocent has dated badly. It belongs to an era when single women having affairs with married men were automatically treated as culprits in their own murders. Whoever is 'innocent' here, it isn't Carolyn, discovered naked, bloodied and trussed up in her own living room.

Killer or not, Rusty is a creep, and his penchant for violent sex only makes it worse. But viewers are expected to agree that this self-confessed stalker is a worthy hero, whose only crime was to love a woman too intensely.

Strong supporting performances help us to ignore these misgivings. O-T Fagbenle is superb as the newly appointed district attorney, a weasel of a man who drawls his words like Truman Capote.

Peter Sarsgaard, who is married to Gyllenhaal's actress sister, Maggie, plays Rusty's ex-colleague and worst enemy, Tommy Molto, a man who suffered years of professional humiliation as the office underling and is now out to extract every drop of revenge.

And Bill Camp is disconcertingly convincing as Rusty's former boss Raymond, now his lawyer, who looks like a heart attack wrapped in a blubber duvet.

The first page of Turow's novel tells us that everyone who meets Raymond thinks, 'He does not look well,' and that was my reaction, too. Give that man a salad.

WELSH TV VARIATIONS

BBC1: 1.35pm BBC Wales Today; Weather. **7.45** BBC Wales Today; Weather.

ITV: 12.50pm News Cymru Wales; Weather. **6.20** Party Election Broadcast. **11.00** News Cymru Wales; Weather.

S4C: 6.00am Cyw. **12noon** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd. **12.05** Bois y Rhondda. **12.30** Heno. **1.00** Ein Llwybrau Celtaidd. **1.30** Cerys Matthews a'r Goeden Faled. **2.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd. **2.05** Prynhawn Da. **3.00** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd. **3.05** Cynefin. **4.00** Awr Fawr: Blociau Rhif. **4.05** Awr Fawr: Tomos a'i Ffrindiau. **4.15** Awr Fawr: Cacamwnci. **4.30** Awr Fawr: Sam Tan. **4.45** Awr Fawr: Sbarc. **5.00** Stwnsh. **6.00** Dan Do. **6.30** Arfordir Cymru: Bae Ceredigion. **6.57** Newyddion S4C. **7.00** Heno. **7.30** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd. **8.00** Pobol y Cwm. Rhys is inconsolable after catching Ffion and Mathew kissing. **8.25** Rownd a Rownd. Iolo executes the next part of his cunning plan. **8.55** Newyddion S4C a'r Tywydd. **9.00** Am Dro! **10.00** Y Llinell Las. **11.00** Grid. **11.15** Cais Quinnell.

PICK OF DIGITAL & ON DEMAND TV

BEFORE WE WAS WE: MADNESS BY MADNESS, ITVX

FIND out where the band came from, the London they grew up in, and the events that shaped them and their music, in this entertaining look at their formative years. The band members are all great raconteurs, with many a colourful story to tell about their youth, misspent and meandering around the bleak landscape of London in the late 1960s and early 1970s — until they formed the band and found a purpose. Many of the original band members were working-class lads, or came from broken homes, their young lives marked by boredom, petty crime, and an awful lot of, as frontman Suggs (pictured centre) puts it, 'farting about'. Examples include climbing up drainpipes to get into cinemas and breaking into the home of singer Lynsey de Paul (but not stealing anything). A few had stints inside when the hijinks went too far — and they got caught. By the end of the first episode, they had nothing else to do but form a band.

The remaining two episodes chart those stumbling early years before the big-time hit and their breakout at home and in America, scoring 16 top-ten singles including House Of Fun, Baggy Trousers and It Must Be Love.

TENNIS GREAT

Federer: Twelve Final Days, Amazon Prime Video

IN 2022, Roger Federer retired from professional tennis. This intensely personal profile recounts those bittersweet final days, while also looking back over an incredible career that saw him bag 20 major singles titles. Asif Kapadia, director of Senna (stream on Channel 4), crafts a poignant tribute, capturing Federer's on-court athleticism and off-court graciousness. We hear from his three main rivals — Andy Murray, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal — as well as getting the Swiss master's own reflections on his life and legacy.

MUSIC MAKERS

Bill Bailey's Musical Master Crafters: Juniors, 8pm, Sky Arts

BILL BAILEY (pictured) is passionate about all kinds of music, and can turn his hand to playing all sorts of different instruments — often as part of his comedy act. For this cheery new special, he talks to the next generation of musicians across the UK, and learns exactly what it takes for them to maintain — and play — musical instruments.

FREEVIEW FILM

Mrs Dalloway, 10.15pm, BBC4

EILEEN ATKINS adapted Virginia Woolf's acclaimed modernist novel for the big screen. Vanessa Redgrave plays the older woman preparing for her party, while Natascha McElhone is the young Clarissa, wooed by two suitors and about to make a choice that will shape her life.

TIME	BBC 4	E4	ITV2
	9 (Scot 24)	13	6
7.00pm	**Great British Railway Journeys** Michael Portillo reaches London	**Hollyoaks** Abe praises Theresa, but he has an ulterior motive	**Deal or No Deal** Stephen Mulhern hosts as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize
7.30pm	**Villages by the Sea** Ben Robinson visits Charlestown	**Come Dine with Me** Taxi driver Jamie serves up a fine dining menu in Edinburgh	
8.00pm	**Pyramids of Mars: Tales of the Tardis** Far away in time, on board an old Remembered Tardis, the Doctor and Ruby pause in battle to reflect on their recent adventures	**Dance Moms** Melissa reveals that she will do anything to get her daughter back on top. Plus, Kelly angers Abby when she makes a drastic decision	**The Masked Singer U.S.** Three celebrities enter the game on DC Superheroes Night as the audience and panellists celebrate their favourite iconic DC superheroes
8.30pm			
9.00pm	**9.15 Talking Doctor Who** David Tennant time travels through the BBC archive to tell the story of the Doctor's classic era	**Gogglebox** The armchair critics' opinions on shows including *Crufts 2022*, *This Is Going to Hurt*, *Byron Baes*, and *Haunted Hospitals*	**Love Island** Things are heating up for the islanders, and with £50,000 up for grabs for one winning couple, everyone has an agenda
9.30pm			
10.00pm	**10.15 Eileen Atkins Remembers Mrs Dalloway** Eileen Atkins reflects on her 1997 film	**Naked Attraction** Bristol estate agent Katie and London student James each choose a date from six naked people, whose bodies are revealed one section at a time	**10.05 Tell Me Everything** Jonny is energised and on top of the world, but an exam triggers a setback he didn't see coming
10.30pm	**Mrs Dalloway (1997,12)** A society hostess faces the ghosts of her past, stirred by the reappearance of a suitor she rebuffed 30 years earlier. Romantic drama, starring Vanessa Redgrave and Rupert Graves (To 12.05)		
11.00pm		**11.05 First Dates** A student has her first-ever date, while a pilot finds it hard to let her guard down (To 12.05)	**11.05 Family Guy** Part one of two. *Star Wars*-themed episode
11.30pm			**11.35 Family Guy** Part two of two. *Star Wars*-themed episode (To 12.05)

ENTERTAINMENT & FACTUAL

ALIBI
Sky 109 Virgin 114

12noon Father Brown. **1.00** Death in Paradise. **2.00** Murdoch Mysteries. **4.00** Elementary. **5.00** Father Brown. **6.00** Shakespeare & Hathaway: Private Investigators. **7.00** Elementary. **8.00** Father Brown. **9.00** Murdoch Mysteries. **10.00** Death in Paradise.

ANIMAL PLANET
Sky 162 Virgin 178

12noon Tanked. **1.00** Pit Bulls & Parolees. **2.00** India's Monkey Man Monster: Expedition Mungo. **3.00** Deadly Dragon of Borneo: Expedition Mungo. **4.00** My Cat from Hell. **5.00** Lone Star Law. **6.00** Tanked. **7.00** Pit Bulls & Parolees. **8.00** Meet the Orangutans. **9.00** Meet the Penguins. **10.00** Edge of Alaska.

BBC THREE
Freeview 23 Sky 115 Virgin 107

7.00pm Top Gear. **8.00** The Traitors U.S.. **9.00** FILM: Only You. (2019) (15) **10.55** Dreaming Whilst Black. **11.50** Paranormal: The Village That Saw Aliens.

COMEDY CENTRAL
Sky 112 Virgin 132

11.55am Last Man Standing. **12.55pm** Impractical Jokers: British Invasion. **1.50** Friends. **10.00** FILM: Austin Powers 3. (2002) (15) **11.45** Impractical Jokers: The Inspired Unemployed.

DAVE (DAYTIME)
Freeview 19 Sky 111 Virgin 127

12noon Storage Hunters UK. **2.00** Extreme Fishing with Robson Green. **3.00** Top Gear. **5.00** The Hairy Bikers' Chicken and Egg. **6.00** Rick Stein's Secret France.

DISCOVERY
Sky 125 Virgin 177

1.00pm Barnwood Builders. **3.00** Gold Rush. **4.00** Alaska: Homestead Rescue. **6.00** Texas Metal. **7.00** Bitchin' Rides. **8.00** Garage Squad. **9.00** Expedition From Hell: The Lost Tapes. **10.00** Naked and Afraid XL.

DRAMA (DAYTIME)
Freeview 20 Sky 143 Virgin 116

11.40am The Bill. **12.40pm** Classic EastEnders. **2.00** London's Burning. **3.00** Lovejoy. **4.10** Tenko. **5.10** Birds of a Feather. **6.00** Waiting for God. **6.40** Are You Being Served?

E4 (DAYTIME)
Freeview 13 Sky 135 Virgin 106

11.00am Modern Family. **12noon** The Big Bang Theory. **2.00** The Goldbergs. **3.00** Modern Family. **4.00** Young Sheldon. **5.00** The Big Bang Theory.

5STAR (DAYTIME)
Freeview 32 Sky 128 Virgin 126

11.00am Traffic Cops. **2.00pm** Police Interceptors. **5.00** Dogs Behaving (Very) Badly. **6.00** Home and Away.

5 ACTION
Freeview 33 Sky 150

11.25am FILM: Cast a Giant Shadow. (1966) (PG) **2.15pm** FILM: Apache. (1954) (U) **4.00** Outback Truckers. **5.00** Traffic Cops. **6.00** Police Interceptors. **9.00** Trucking Heavy. **10.00** Outback Truckers.

5 SELECT
Freeview 46 Sky 153 Virgin 138

9.00am The Yorkshire Vet. **1.00pm** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. **4.00** Columbo. **6.00** Paul Martin's Antiques Showdown. **8.00** The Good Ship Murder. **9.00** The Madame Blanc Mysteries. **10.00** Yellowstone. **11.00** Nazi Megastructures.

5 USA (DAYTIME)
Freeview 21 Sky 141 Virgin 120

12noon Law & Order. **6.00** NCIS. **6.55** Entertainment News on 5.

FOOD NETWORK UK
Freeview 43 Sky 140 Virgin 190

11.00am Ainsley's Good Mood Food. **12noon** The Great British Bake Off. **2.00** James Martin's Mediterranean. **3.00** The Hairy Bikers' Food Tour of Britain. **4.00** The Pioneer Woman. **5.00** Girl Meets Farm. **6.00** James Martin's Mediterranean. **7.00** The Great British Bake Off. **8.00** The Hairy Bikers' Food Tour of Britain. **9.00** River Cottage Every Day. **10.00** Jamie Oliver: Together.

GOLD
Sky 110 Virgin 124

11.20am Last of the Summer Wine. **12.40pm** The Green Green Grass. **1.20** My Hero. **2.00** Still Open All Hours. **2.40** Dad's Army. **3.20** Are You Being Served? **4.00** Last of the Summer Wine. **5.20** Still Open All Hours. **6.00** The Green Green Grass. **6.40** Dad's Army. **8.00** Only Fools and Horses. **8.40** The Thin Blue Line. **9.20** dinnerladies. **10.00** The Royle Family. **10.40** Bottom.

GREAT! TV
Freeview 50 Sky 157 Virgin 170

11.00am Castle. **1.00pm** Murder, She Wrote. **2.00** Father Dowling Mysteries. **3.00** Diagnosis Murder. **4.00** Return of the Saint. **5.00** Murder, She Wrote. **7.00** M*A*S*H. **9.00** The Avengers. **10.00** Randall and Hopkirk (Deceased). **11.00** Return of the Saint.

ITV2 (DAYTIME)
Freeview 6 Sky 118 Virgin 115

12noon Dress to Impress. **1.00** Deal or No Deal. **2.00** Family Fortunes. **3.00** Veronica Mars. **4.00** Dawson's Creek. **5.00** Celebrity Supermarket Sweep. **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase.

ITV3 (DAYTIME)
Freeview 10 Sky 119 Virgin 117

10.25am The Royal. **11.35** Heartbeat. **1.40pm** Classic Emmerdale. **2.40** Classic Coronation Street. **3.50** Inspector Morse. **6.00** Heartbeat.

ITV4 (DAYTIME)
Freeview 26 Sky 120 Virgin 118

10.35am UEFA Euro 2024 Highlights. **11.35** The Return of Sherlock Holmes. **12.45pm** River Monsters. **1.15** British Touring Cars. **1.30** ITV Racing Live: Royal Ascot. **4.25** The Derby Through the Years. **4.40** The Sweeney. **5.50** ITV Racing Live: Royal Ascot. **6.30** River Monsters.

MORE4 (DAYTIME)
Freeview 18 Sky 136 Virgin 147

10.25am A New Life in the Sun. **11.25** Find It, Fix It, Flog It. **12.30pm** Come Dine with Me. **3.10** Four in a Bed. **5.50** Chateau DIY. **6.55** Car S.O.S.

NAT'L GEOGRAPHIC
Sky 129 Virgin 183

12noon Car S.O.S. **1.00** Air Crash Investigation. **3.00** Hitler's Last Stand. **4.00** Seconds from Disaster. **5.00** Car S.O.S. **6.00** Air Crash Investigation. **8.00** Draining the Bermuda Triangle. **9.00** Mystery of MH370: Drain the Oceans. **10.00** Alaska: The Next Generation. **11.00** Air Crash Investigation.

PBS AMERICA
Freeview 84 Sky 174 Virgin 187

1.00pm Beautiful Serengeti. **1.30** 1945-1953: From World War to Cold War. **2.45** SAS: Rogue Warriors. **4.00** The War. **5.00** Afghanistan: The Wounded Land. **6.10** 1945-1953: From World War to Cold War. **7.20** SAS: Rogue Warriors. **8.35** The War. **9.40** Afghanistan: The Wounded Land. **10.50** The Movement and the 'Madman'.

REALLY
Freeview 17 Sky 142 Virgin 128

1.00pm Money for Nothing. **2.00** The Repair Shop. **3.00** Celebrity Antiques Road Trip. **5.00** The Yorkshire Auction House. **7.00** Antiques Road Trip. **9.00** Who Do You Think You Are? **10.00** The Hotel Inspector. **11.00** Help! My House Is Haunted.

SKY ARTS
Freeview 36 Sky 130 Virgin 123

12noon The Joy of Painting. **1.00** Tales of the Unexpected. **2.00** The South Bank Show. **3.00** The Art Mysteries. **4.00** Discovering: Michelle Pfeiffer. **5.00** The Joy of Painting. **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected. **7.00** Painting Birds with Jim and Nancy Moir: Kids Special. **8.00** Bill Bailey's Musical Master Crafters: Juniors. **9.00** Discovering: Mel Gibson. **10.00** Spike Milligan: The Unseen Archive. **11.35** Decoding Turner.

SKY ATLANTIC
Sky 108

10.05am Gomorrah. **12.10pm** Game of Thrones. **1.15** The Sopranos. **3.20** Six Feet Under. **5.30** Gomorrah. **7.30** Game of Thrones. **9.00** House of the Dragon. **10.10** Band of Brothers. **11.25** Succession.

SKY COMEDY
Sky 114 Virgin 112

11.40am Entourage. **12.50pm** High Maintenance. **2.10** Veep. **3.20** Ballers. **4.30** Sort Of. **5.00** Will & Grace. **6.00** The Office (US). **7.00** The Conners. **8.00** Will & Grace. **9.00** Young Rock. **10.00** Jerrod Carmichael Reality Show. **11.10** The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.

SKY DOCUMENTARIES
Sky 121 Virgin 188

12noon FILM: Bobby Robson: More Than a Manager. (2018) (12) **2.00** FILM: Mama's Boy: A Story from Our Americas. (2022) (12) **4.00** The Directors. **5.00** Discovering: Sally Field. **6.00** The Eighties. **6.55**

RADIO

RADIO 4
FM: 92.4-94.6MHZ; LW: 198KHZ

5.30am News Briefing.
5.43 Prayer for the Day.
5.45 Farming Today.
6.00 Today.
9.00 In Our Time. Melvyn Bragg and guests discuss the development of the doctrine of Karma.
9.45 NatureBang.
10.00 Woman's Hour.
11.00 PICK **This Cultural Life.**
11.45 Book of the Week: The Stalin Affair. By Giles Milton.
12noon News.
12.04 The Bottom Line.
12.32 Sliced Bread. Greg Foot looks at acupressure mats.
12.57 Weather.
1.00 The World at One.
1.45 Understand: The UK Election. The political geography of the devolved nations.
2.00 The Archers.
2.15 PICK **Drama: Middle Men.** By Sid Sagar.
3.00 Ramblings. New series. Clare Balding and artist Shelly Perkins paint bluebells in Shropshire's Mortimer Forest.
3.27 Radio 4 Appeal.
3.30 Feedback. New series. Listeners' views.
4.00 The Briefing Room.
4.30 BBC Inside Science.
5.00 PM; Weather.
6.00 Six O'Clock News.
6.30 Rhysearch. New series. Rhys James gets to the bottom of our declining attention span. With guest Gloria Mark.
7.00 The Archers. Kirsty leads the charge.
7.15 Front Row. A review of film *The Bikeriders*.
8.00 The Media Show.

PICK OF TODAY'S RADIO

THIS CULTURAL LIFE, 11AM, RADIO 4

SALMAN RUSHDIE was to have recorded this interview in August 2022, but a week before that, he was attacked on stage. A remarkably sanguine Rushdie now reflects on that event and on earlier experiences. He recalls growing up in Bombay with its 'joyous intermingling of cultures', and his shock when he first came to England. He also claims that working as an advertising copywriter ('Naughty but Nice' was one of his slogans) gave his writing discipline, calls himself a 'frustrated actor', and stresses the importance of laughter and comedy in both literature and life.

ITV3 (10)

Heartbeat Jack and Bernie encourage Gina's creativity. David helps a friend run away, and Lord Ashfordly's dog attacks the window cleaner — so Peggy calms the canine

Vera DCI Stanhope is called out to the banks of the River Tyne, where the body of a young woman has been washed up. Although the victim appears to have been a popular manager at a local green energy company, as well as a loyal friend and a loving mother and wife, Vera uncovers a web of intrigue

Wire in the Blood Hill's judgement is called into question when DNA evidence comes to light suggesting he may have unwittingly helped secure the conviction of an innocent man

11.45 The Royal Samantha receives bad news (To 12.35)

ITV4 (26)

The Motorbike Show Henry Cole goes green-laning in Oxfordshire, visits speed week in Yorkshire and tells the story of the Streetfighter

Junk and Disorderly Henry Cole chances his arm at an auction of vintage petroliana, and works against the clock to restore a so-called belly pump from the 1920s

The 1% Club Quiz hosted by Lee Mack in which the questions are all about logic and common sense, with 100 contestants having a chance of winning up to £100,000

Death Race (2008,15) A crooked warden coerces a falsely imprisoned convict into taking part in a deadly car race to win his freedom. Sci-fi thriller, starring Jason Statham, Joan Allen, Ian McShane and Tyrese Gibson. Includes FYI Daily (To 12.10)

MORE4 (18)

6.55 Car S.O.S The boys take on a 1963 Citroen HY Van

7.55 Grand Designs Kevin McCloud follows the progress of Nathan and Amye as they build a giant cathedral-like property modelled on Dutch barn-style houses, but with a contemporary twist

24 Hours in A&E A 51-year-old is brought in after coming off his bike and doctors are concerned he may have suffered life-changing damage to his spine

Rescue: Extreme Medics The air ambulance is dispatched to two serious road traffic collisions, while a minibus has collided with a car

11.05 24 Hours in A&E Three boys are admitted for very different reasons, including cyclist Ollie, who arrives with head injuries (To 12.05)

SKY MIX (11)

Star Trek: Voyager Neelix, Chakotay and Paris are sent on a dangerous away mission deep inside a class-one nebula

The Rookie Officers Nolan, Harper and Lopez dive into a complex case when the son of a criminal court judge with many enemies is kidnapped

S.W.A.T. The team hunt for a deadly band of mercenaries hired by a wealthy CEO trying to flee the U.S

The Twilight Zone A hotel manager starts to question her reality

10.40 Killer in My Village How a bitter divorce acted as the catalyst for a horrific murder carried out by an estranged wife and her lover

11.40 Grimm Nick gets the chance to get closer to his ancestors (To 12.35)

QUEST (12)

Aussie Gold Hunters The Poseidon Crew clash over a decision to switch claims. Shane and Russell get help from a gyrocopter, and the Ferals are hit by exhaustion

Salvage Hunters Modern-day treasure-hunter Drew Pritchard travels the length and breadth of the UK in search of weird and wonderful objects

Richard Hammond's Workshop The Cogs go international restoring an iconic 1970s Royal Enfield Interceptor motorbike

Engineering Repurposed In the U.S., a rusty railway is transformed into an urban park. In the Netherlands, a derelict monument is now a social hub

How Do They Do It? The air-conditioning system at the Sydney Opera House

How Do They Do It? Tips for brewing moonshine (To 12.00)

DAVE (19)

Would I Lie to You? With Danny Dyer, Jon Richardson, Moira Stuart and Joe Lycett

7.40 Richard Osman's House of Games With Matt Edmondson and Sabrina Grant

8.20 Richard Osman's House of Games With Charlie Brooks, Les Dennis, Darren Harriott and Melinda Messenger

QI XL Host Stephen Fry poses tough questions about happiness to Andy Hamilton, Rich Hall, Phill Jupitus and Alan Davies

Have I Got a Bit More News for You Richard Ayoade hosts an extended edition of the satirical news quiz, with comedian Maisie Adam and journalist Justin Webb

Taskmaster Lou Sanders chews on stationery, Sian Gibson is crushed by a caravan, and Iain Stirling waves a stick about (To 12.00)

DRAMA (20)

7.20 Last of the Summer Wine Truly investigates the case of a bus that disappeared between stops

Father Brown The mysterious disappearance of an old friend leads Father Brown and Sid on a quest to find Lannington Rosary

A Small Light Miep and Jan's marriage is tested when he ignores her plea to abandon a dangerous mission. Jan hides

10.05 New Tricks The detectives investigate the murder of an East German immigrant, but all they have to go on are his final words, which translate as 'blue flower'

11.25 Soldier, Soldier The men take part in a training exercise in dealing with chemical weapons, and the arrival of a new soldier in the regiment brings trouble (To 12.35)

5STAR (32)

GPs: Behind Closed Doors Dr Taylor investigates an overnight A&E patient's lack of symptoms from a kidney infection, despite the confirmation that this diagnosis is correct

Casualty 24/7: Every Second Counts Paediatric sister Jemma Wray treats two critically ill children, and nurse Will Gibbons looks after a 28-year-old patient

A&E After Dark Security are called after a violent argument begins between two patients in a waiting room

999: Emergency Call Out An unconscious woman is found on the street, requiring urgent medical care and police investigation

Ambulance: Code Red A driver is trapped in his car after it careered out of control (To 12.00)

5USA (21)

NCIS When a leading financial advisor is shot dead at a naval station, NCIS investigates by interviewing the victim's 3D hologram of herself

NCIS The officers are called in when Chief Warrant Officer Rafi Nazar is suspected of trying to sell stolen classified Navy software used to pilot combat drones

Blue Bloods Danny and Baez come under attack as they escort confiscated drugs to be incinerated, and Frank must deal with personal issues

Law & Order: Special Victims Unit The murder of a college student bears all the hallmarks of a notorious serial killer

Law & Order: Special Victims Unit The team's investigation into the abduction of two girls leads to a schizophrenic artist from Louisiana who is in New York (To 12.00)

■ THE comedy drama **MIDDLE MEN (2.15PM, RADIO 4)** explores the reality of the beautiful game as it follows a blundering and touchy referee and his two assistants at a Sunday league football game. Today is special as the officials are going to be observed, and may be fast-tracked for promotion — but can they control 22 men with anger management issues? Fay Ripley (pictured) plays the club secretary who welcomes the unlikely trio to the ramshackle ground.

9.00 Loose Ends. With guests Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and Tara Fitzgerald.
9.45 Empire of Tea. Sathnam Sanghera shares the history of the tea break with help from staff at Wolverhampton's New Cross Hospital.
9.59 Weather.
10.00 The World Tonight.
10.45 Book at Bedtime: Jensen: The Bellevue Poltergeist. By Heidi Amsinck.
11.00 The Today Podcast.
11.30 Bonnie Bollywood: 25 Years of Indian Film-making in Scotland.
12midnight News; Weather.
12.30 Book of the Week: The Stalin Affair.
12.48 Shipping Forecast.
1.00 As World Service.

RADIO 2 FM: 88-90.2MHZ

6.30am Zoe Ball. **9.30** Vernon Kay. **12noon** Jeremy Vine. **2.00pm** Scott Mills. **4.00** Sara Cox. **7.00** Jo Whiley. **9.00** The Country Show with Bob Harris. **10.00** DJ Spoony's Magnificent 7. **10.30** DJ Spoony's Rhythm Nation. **12midnight** OJ Borg.

RADIO 3 FM: 90.2-92.4MHZ

6.30am Breakfast. **9.30** Essential Classics. **1.00pm** Classical Live. **4.00** Composer of the Week: Dvorak. **5.00** In Tune. **7.00** Classical Mixtape. **7.30** Radio 3 in Concert. Bruckner's Seventh Symphony. **9.45** The Essay: The Sounds of Tyne. **10.00** Night Tracks. **11.30** 'Round Midnight. **12.30am** Through the Night.

RADIO 5 LIVE MW: 693/909KHZ

6.00am 5 Live Breakfast. **9.00** Nicky Campbell. **11.00** Adrian Chiles. **1.00pm** 5 Live Sport. **2.00** Euro 2024. Slovenia v Serbia. **4.00** 5 Live Sport. **5.00** Euro 2024. Denmark v England. **7.00** 5 Live Sport. **8.00** Euro 2024. Spain v Italy. **10.30** 6-0-6. **11.30** Johnny I'Anson. **12midnight** Gordon Smart: Live from Euro 2024.

SPORT

EUROSPORT 1
Sky 413 Virgin 521

10.55am Cycling: Women's Tour of Switzerland. **11.50** Cycling: U23 Giro d'Italia. **12.50pm** Live Cycling: French Road Championships. **2.15** Olympic Games: The Power of the Olympics. **2.45** Live Cycling: French Road Championships. **4.30** Triathlon. **5.00** Cliff Diving. **6.00** Live Powerlifting. **9.00** Cycling: French Road Championships. **11.00** Olympic Games: Breaking Life.

SKY MAIN EVENT
Sky 401 Virgin 501

10.00am Live Tennis. The Berlin Ladies Open. **3.00pm** Live ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Afghanistan v India. Coverage of the Super Eight match. **7.00** Live T20 Blast Cricket. Yorkshire Vikings v Lancashire Lightning. **10.30** Live PGA Tour Golf. The Travelers Championship. **11.00** Live Women's PGA Championship.

SKY PREMIER LEAGUE
Sky 402 Virgin 502

12noon Gary Neville's Soccerbox. **1.00** Best Goals. **2.00** Premier League Highlights. **5.00** Premier League Review. **7.00** World Beaters. **8.00** SSN Euro Matchday. **10.00** SSN Euro Report. **10.30** Back Pages Tonight. **11.00** Class of '92.

SKY CRICKET
Sky 404 Virgin 504

9.00am ICC Men's T20 World Cup. **3.00pm** Live ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Afghanistan v India. **7.00** Live Vitality T20 Blast Cricket. Yorkshire Vikings v Lancashire Lightning. **10.30** ICC Men's T20 World Cup. **3.00am** Live ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Australia v Bangladesh.

SKY MIX
Sky 416 Virgin 510

1.00pm Formula 1. **2.00** Men's T20 World Cup. **3.00** NFL Highlights. **5.00** Fight Night. **6.00** NFL Bitesize Highlights. **6.30** My Icon: Maggie Alphonsi. **6.45** Super League Highlights. **7.00** Live T20 Blast Cricket. Yorkshire Vikings v Lancashire Lightning. **10.30** My Icon: Maggie Alphonsi. **10.45** Super League Highlights. **11.00** Live Women's PGA Championship.

TNT SPORTS 1
Sky 410 Virgin 527

9.00am UEFA Europa League. **1.00pm** UEFA Champions League. **4.00** MLB Highlights. **5.00** NBA Action. **5.30** MLB: Off the Bat. **6.00** Live MLB. Tampa Bay Rays v Minnesota Twins. **9.15** TNT Sports Reload. **9.30** What Went Down. **10.00** UFC: The Ultimate Fighter. **11.00** Rio Ferdinand Meets.

TNT SPORTS 2
Sky 411 Virgin 528

11.30am European Rally Highlights. **12noon** EuroCup Basketball. **5.00** WWE Friday Night SmackDown. **6.30** WWE Monday Night Raw. **9.00** Live MLB. New York Yankees v Baltimore Orioles.

TNT SPORTS 3
Sky 417 Virgin 529

11.30am Premiership Rugby Union. **1.00pm** European Rugby Challenge Cup. **2.30** Investec Champions Cup. **4.00** NWSL. **5.00** The Grudge. **6.30** Women's One-Day International Cricket. **7.30** Ultimate Pool. **11.30** European Rally Highlights.

MOVIES

FILM4
Freeview 14 Sky 313 Virgin 428

11.00am Rio Grande. (1950) (U) **1.10pm** Three Billboards Interview Special. **1.15** The Bridge on the River Kwai. (1957) (PG) **4.30** Yangtse Incident. (1957) (U) **6.45** Star Trek: Nemesis. (2002) (12) **9.00** Venom. (2018) (15) A journalist gains superhuman strength and power when his body merges with an alien organism. Fantasy adventure, starring Tom Hardy and Riz Ahmed. **11.10** Angel Has Fallen. (2019) (15) Action thriller sequel, starring Gerard Butler. **1.30am** Force 10 from Navarone. (1978) (15)

GREAT! ACTION
Freeview 42 Sky 323 Virgin 426

12noon Gun Fury. (1953) (U) **1.50** Apache Territory. (1958) (PG) **3.20** Wild West Chronicles. **4.50** GREAT! Movie News Extra. **5.00** The Return of the Soldier. (1982) (PG) **7.15** Battle Honours. **8.15** Icetastrophe. (2014) (PG) **10.00** A Dangerous Man. (2010) (18) Starring Steven Seagal.

GREAT! MOVIES
Freeview 34 Sky 321 Virgin 425

1.00pm An Aurora Teagarden Mystery: Last Scene Alive. (2018) (PG) **3.00** An Aurora Teagarden Mystery: Reap What You Sew. (2018) (PG) **5.00** Lost Letter Mysteries for Christmas. (2014) (PG) **7.00** Cromwell. (1970) (PG) **10.00** Bronson. (2008) (18) **11.55** Killerman. (2019) (15)

GREAT! ROMANCE
Freeview 52 Sky 319 Virgin 424

10.00am The Wedding Arrangement. (2022) (PG) **12noon** The Vows We Keep. (2021) (U) **2.00** The Christmas Cottage. (2017) (U) **4.00** My Christmas Love. (2016) (PG) **5.50** Runaway Christmas Bride. (2017) (PG) **8.00** Marry Me at Christmas. (2017) (PG) **9.50** A Rose for Christmas. (2017) (PG)

SKY DRAMA
Sky 310 Virgin 410

10.35am Jackie. (2016) (15) **12.20pm** Don't Worry Darling. (2022) (15) **2.25** Mr Holmes. (2015) (PG) **4.20** It Is In Us All. (2022) (15) **6.00** Summit Fever. (2022) (15) **9.45** Cold Mountain. (2003) (15)

SKY PREMIERE
Sky 301 Virgin 401

11.45am Ride On. (2023) (PG) **2.00pm** Bonus Track. (2023) (15) **3.50** Blue Beetle. (2023) (12) **6.00** American Star. (2024) (15) **8.00** Meg 2: The Trench. (2023) (12) **10.00** The Great Escaper. (2023) (12) A war veteran sneaks out of his care home in Hove to attend a D-Day commemoration in Normandy. Drama starring Michael Caine. **11.40** Ruthless. (2023) (15)

TALKING PICTURES TV
Freeview 82 Sky 328 Virgin 445

11.30am The Night My Number Came Up. (1955) (PG) **1.30pm** Saloon Bar. (1940) (PG) **3.00** Crown Court. **4.30** Danger UXB. **5.35** Death Goes to School. (1953) (U) **6.50** Small Hotel. (1957) (U) **8.00** The Brothers. **9.05** Van der Valk. **10.10** The Innocent. (1993) (15)

Edge of the Earth. **7.55** Stax: Soulsville USA. **9.00** Fatboy Slim: Right Here, Right Now. **10.50** Hurst: The First and Only.

SKY HISTORY
Sky 123 Virgin 131

12noon Secrets in the Ice. **1.00** Pawn Stars. **2.00** Auction Hunters. **3.00** Secrets of the Lost Liners. **5.00** Pawn Stars. **6.00** American Pickers. **7.00** Forged in Fire. **8.00** Swamp People. **9.00** Swamp Mysteries with Troy Landry. **10.00** Adventure Gold Diggers. **11.00** Rust Valley Restorers.

SKY MAX
Sky 113 Virgin 111

12noon The Flash. **1.00** MacGyver. **3.00** Hawaii Five-0. **4.00** S.W.A.T. **5.00** DC's Legends of Tomorrow. **6.00** Stargate SG-1. **8.00** A Discovery of Witches. **9.00** The Walking Dead: The Ones Who Live. **10.00** A League of Their Own: Mexican Road Trip. **11.00** The Walking Dead.

SKY SCI-FI
Sky 139 Virgin 122

11.00am Warehouse 13. **12noon** Star Trek: Voyager. **1.00** Star Trek: The Next Generation. **3.00** Warehouse 13. **4.00** Star Trek: Enterprise. **5.00** Star Trek: Voyager. **6.00** Star Trek: The Next Generation. **8.00** Atlantis. **9.00** FILM: Halloween. (1978) (18) **11.00** Wynonna Earp.

SKY WITNESS
Sky 107 Virgin 110

12noon New Amsterdam. **1.00** 9-1-1. **2.00** FBI: Most Wanted. **3.00** Caught Red Handed. **4.30** Nothing to Declare. **8.00** Blue Bloods. **10.00** The Good Doctor. First episode of the medical drama. **11.00** The Rookie.

W
Freeview 25 Sky 132 Virgin 125

11.00am DIY SOS: The Big Build. **1.00pm** Tipping Point. **4.00** My Dream Home. **6.00** Celebrity Tipping Point. **7.00** Tipping Point: Lucky Stars. **8.00** DIY SOS: The Big Build. **9.00** Nick Knowles' Better Homes. **10.00** Inside the Ambulance. **11.00** Louis Theroux: Miami Mega Jail.

YESTERDAY
Freeview 27 Sky 155 Virgin 129

11.00am World War Weird. **12noon** Great British Railway Journeys. **1.00** Antiques Roadshow. **2.00** Bangers & Cash. **4.00** The World at War. **5.00** World War Weird. **6.00** Antiques Roadshow. **7.00** Bangers & Cash. **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. **9.00** Bangers & Cash. **11.00** Abandoned Engineering.

OSCAR CAINER

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HAPPY Solstice! Today the cosmic pendulum begins swinging again as the Sun completes its six-month arc across our skies. As the source of light and energy moves into Cancer, understanding the past is key to creating the future we want to live. And as the Strawberry Full Moon approaches, positive action will be magnified. Our next steps can be giant strides.

ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 20 **THE saying 'you are the company you keep' reminds us people we associate with have a big effect on our lives. Sometimes, they can be obstacles to our progress; when we want to try doing things differently, they voice their disapproval. But when we've got their support, we feel emboldened; there's no limit to what we can achieve. On the day of the Solstice, think carefully about who you ask for advice. Choose the right person, and you'll get the encouragement you need to fuel you on a new path forwards.** *Maximise the Solstice energy! Your latest forecast is packed with insight. Call 0906 751 5601.*

TAURUS Apr 21 - May 21 AS LONG as your heart is in the right place, you can be confident that everything will work out OK. How can you be sure it's where it needs to be? When it comes to the emotional aspects of your world, listen to your intuition and be as compassionate and sensitive as you can be. The world is full of people who force things to happen. But when we're prepared to act out of inspiration rather than fear, we soon realise we don't need to fight. Open-hearted generosity will open surprising doors to you this Solstice day. *The Solstice brings positive change! There's great news in your latest forecast. Call 0906 751 5602.*

GEMINI May 22 - June 22 **WHEN things aren't working out as they 'should', it's time to think about what you think 'should' be happening. The Sun leaving your sign is creating an energy shift that might be discombobulating. But this is the cosmos encouraging you to consider where you're investing your energy so you can adapt to a situation out of your control. The fact you don't have absolute power doesn't have to be a problem. If you accept what you can't change and just do your best, the Solstice promises that positive things will happen.** *The Solstice can transform your world. For a valuable key to the week, call 0906 751 5603.*

CANCER June 23 - July 23 FRUIT from a supermarket tastes good. But when you've gone to the trouble of getting a ladder and climbing a tree to reach an apple, it tastes even sweeter. You could choose an easier route to reach your objective. There are shortcuts you could take. But you've chosen this path for a reason. It demands more creativity. The Solstice brings a reminder of why you're doing what you're doing. A taste of success brings the energy to keep going. Good. The fruit of your labours will be well worth the effort. *This is a very powerful time. The Solstice brings transformation. Find out more. Call 0906 751 5604.*

LEO July 24 - Aug 23 **THE usual rules don't apply in quite the same way to Leos. Which doesn't entitle you to exert power over others. Or to insist that it's 'your way or the highway.' But it's important not to let yourself be constricted by narrow ideas. Your dreams won't manifest if you leave them in your imagination. You need to work on them. By being gentle with anyone who doesn't share your sense of adventure, you can take advantage of the Solstice energy, and make a move towards fulfilling one of your deepest wishes. Go on!** *The Solstice highlights dynamic changes. Your future has huge potential. Call 0906 751 5605.*

VIRGO Aug 24 - Sep 23 YOU find yourself in a challenging situation and are doubting your ability to sort it. The last thing you want is to upset anyone. And it seems no matter how you approach this, someone's going to have to back down, which will dent their pride and create another problem. Is a happy-ever-after solution possible? Your desire for harmony is admirable. But you're not going to get it by telling people what you think they want to hear. The Solstice brings the courage to be honest. You'll be surprised by the response you get. *Wonderful opportunities arise as the Solstice energises your life. For great news, call 0906 751 5606.*

LIBRA Sep 24 - Oct 23 **SINCE when do you need to have something to say before you talk to someone? Humans are experts at small talk. We're good at saying whatever pops into our minds — and as long as we're not saying anything critical, it's usually well received. The Solstice encourages you to say something you've been holding back from sharing. An overdue conversation needs to take place. How are you going to start it? By taking a deep breath and talking. You'll find that you both know what needs to be discussed.** *Take full advantage of the Solstice. To create the change you wish for, call your latest forecast: 0906 751 5607.*

SCORPIO Oct 24 - Nov 22 HERE on planet Earth, we've reached one of the points in our journey where the Sun appears to stand still. The Solstices mark the rhythm of the world, which influences everything that lives on this ball or rock. Every day, we need to eat, drink and sleep. We have to replenish our food, and work to make sure we've got enough money to shop. Today marks the end of one cycle and the start of a new one. It brings a fresh opportunity into your life. Just make sure you're not so caught up in your daily rhythm that you miss it. *How will the Solstice transform your life? There's inspiring news when you call 0906 751 5608.*

SAGITTARIUS Nov 23 - Dec 21 **THE Solstice offers a chance to develop understanding that makes you feel more at ease about a difficult situation. This will come as a result of a discussion with someone unwilling to communicate. By being honest about your concerns, you can change that. If you let down protective barriers and are prepared to reveal your vulnerability, you'll pave the way for a meaningful conversation. At a profound and important level, this will build a connection that turns out to be mutually supportive. And insightful.** *The Solstice brings powerful positive change! For great news about your future, call 0906 751 5609.*

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 20 WHEN images/ideas keep appearing in our minds, we can't just ignore them. Even if they don't seem relevant, or make much sense, they're there for a reason. And blanking them out is the same as turning away from an opportunity. The Solstice is the ideal moment to explore something you've been trying to push to the back of your mind. You're not going to be able to move on until you've explored it. It might look scary, but that's only because it involves change. If you look at it, you'll see it also involves magic. *The Solstice suggests good times are on the way. Learn more in your in-depth forecast. Call 0906 751 5610.*

AQUARIUS Jan 21 - Feb 19 **WE TEND to categorise kids into those with a talent for the arts, those who are more scientifically minded, and those who are good at sport. We do this because we know it's unlikely for anyone to excel in all these areas. But the consequence is that we grow up thinking we fit into one group better than others (which we then don't think we're good at). And this thinking limits us. Have you developed a mental block, based on someone else's judgment of your skills? Today's question is what can you achieve if you try?** *Discover why the Solstice is so magical for you. Call your latest forecast: 0906 751 5611.*

PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20 YOUR imagination is powerful. In the blink of an eye, it can take you from London to Sydney via New York. It can envisage any possibility, no matter how unrealistic it might be. Yet it has its limits. If you ask it to focus on the concept of eternity it struggles to maintain an interest. Likewise with profound emotions. That's because feelings happen in our hearts, not our heads. The Solstice opens a door to a place where your sensitivity is more important than usual. As an intuitive Piscean, use this energy to start realising a dream. *The Solstice offers the key to the future you dream of. Call your latest forecast: 0906 751 5612.*

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GARFIELD

I CAN'T DO MANY OF THE THINGS I USED TO BE ABLE TO DO

AT LEAST I HOPE NOT

JIM DAVIS 6-20

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ODD STREAK

MANTIS

WE'VE LOCATED IT, AND REST ASSURED, WE'LL COMMENCE REATTACHMENT ONCE THE KIDS FINISH PLAYING FOOTBALL WITH IT.

Odd Streak 'Striving For Quantity' ebook, available for £3.99. Email info@stoneytoons.com to purchase.

CHLOE & CO

I ONCE PUT TOGETHER A PERFECT TINY MODEL OF THE CUTTY SARK IN A BOTTLE

THAT MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE HARD

GETTING OUT OF THE BOTTLE CERTAINLY WASN'T EASY

To order Chloe & Co: Has Anyone Seen My Love Life? by Gray Jolliffe for £14.39, go to mailshop.co.uk/books or call 020 3176 2937. Free UK delivery on orders over £25.

FRED BASSET

I THINK HE'S LOST

HE CERTAINLY LOOKS LOST, SARGE

Of COURSE I'm not lost!... I know every inch of this district!

RIGHT! WE'LL TAKE HIM IN!

OKAY, SARGE!... I'VE GOT A PIECE OF STRING HERE

THE NAME'S ON HIS COLLAR— I'LL RING UP HIS OWNER

We'll have them for false arrest!

ALEX GRAHAM LIMITED

To order the Fred Basset Yearbook 2024 by Alex Graham for £9.99, go to mailshop.co.uk/books or call 020 3176 2937. Free UK delivery on orders over £25.

PETERBOROUGH

email: pboro@dailymail.co.uk

Even a raging rhino can easily be run out

THERE was a school 'house' cricket match and I was batting with the captain. He hit a corking drive straight past me, calling for a run, which we completed. Still with my back to him, I distinctly heard 'YES' for a second. So with head down, oblivious to all, I turned and charged furiously back up the pitch like a raging rhino.

While still recovering breath, I noticed that several players and the umpire (a sports master) were laughing, and I appeared to be the object of their amusement. I wondered why, until I turned round and found myself face to face with my captain standing there.

Now, even those with only the most rudimentary knowledge of the game will have realised our situation was, to say the least, untenable; irredeemable. I watched as the wicket at the other end was broken, meaning one of us was now well and truly run out!

Much angered, I let the captain know in no uncertain terms what I thought of his run-calling abilities.

The umpire intervened and decided I was the one who should be dismissed, even threatening to give me 50 lines for 'ungentlemanly conduct' if I didn't beat a hasty retreat. It would be the closest I'd get to a 50 that day. With this threat hanging over my head, I returned meekly with my bat between my legs to the pavilion, where doubtless I would be subjected to yet more ribbing remarks.

After the match, the captain confirmed that he had indeed shouted 'yes' but changed his mind almost immediately, which I didn't hear. Such fun.

David H. Cox, Kidlington, Oxford

Sign Language

FEATHERED FREELOADERS: *The dogs may not have been impressed but at least there was no cat among the pigeons!*

David Wilson, Southend-on-Sea, Essex

Out Of The Mouths Of Babes

FURTHER to the anecdote about the 'Derraffe', I recall playing I Spy with the family one Christmas. It was decided we would use flowers. One of the children stated: 'Something beginning with CH'. After several wild guesses, we had to give up and were informed: 'Chulip'!

A. White, Gosport, Hants

Limerick

I've packed my big suitcase away,
Flogged my holiday togs on eBay,
Adios, Tenerife,
I can do without grief,
Protesters are ruling the day.

Bethan Morgan, Swansea

Picture that!

DRAWING THE LINE: *Did they run out of paint?*

Spotted locally by Nick Fletcher of Malton, North Yorks

Wordy wise

COUNT OLYMPUS — Ancient Greek nobleman.
MEDUSA THE GORGONE — snake-haired monster has vanished.
POSEIDONE — Greek sea god is through.
RING MIDAS — call monarch to order gold.
PIGASUS — mythological winged porker.

Dave Cullen, Alwoodley, Leeds

Joke

ANYONE here for the yodelling lessons, please form an orderly, orderly, orderly-he-queue.

Bob Marsden, Sheffield

Today's poem

VOTING DAY

Where do I put that vital X
When voting day arrives?
Who do I want in Number Ten
To govern all our lives?
I've had the Left, I've had the Right,
And others in between,
All making me their promises
Upon my TV screen.
From early days of Attlee,
Of Churchill through to Blair,
In times of Heath and Thatcher,
Well, I was always there.
I've got to make my mind up,
Just like I did before.
But this year's got me wondering,
After all, I'm 94.

Ruth Spencer, Maidstone, Kent

Follow-up

IN the 1970s, I took a phone call at my work and told my employer an 'old sailor' would be calling to see him later. All was revealed when Tony the wholesaler turned up, to much laughter — and blushes on my part.

Mrs S. Evans, Prenton, Merseyside

One-line Philosophers

■ IT TAKES less time to do a thing right than it does to explain why you did it wrong.

S. Challis, Chelmsford, Essex

■ SEND your contributions to Peterborough, Daily Mail Letters, 9 Derry Street, London W8 5HY

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LETTERS

Write to: Daily Mail Letters, 9 Derry Street, London W8 5HY
email: letters@dailymail.co.uk

Starmer's staffers

WHILE the debate goes on about how election promises, especially Labour's, are going to be funded, I have a different question.

Starmer promises 6,500 extra teachers and 13,000 extra community police officers. He further says that 3,000 empty classrooms will become nurseries, all requiring teachers. If we assume two teachers per nursery, that's another 6,000 people.

Then there will be more mental health workers. And who is going to provide the promised extra 40,000 NHS appointments a week? NHS staff say they are already overworked.

Where are all these people going to come from? You can't just drag them off the streets; they will need training and security checks.

If I were Rishi Sunak, that is a question I would ask Starmer. Perhaps there is now a magic people tree.

CHRIS MURPHY, Derby

Who will pay?

MAYBE I'm being paranoid but when Sir Keir Starmer gave his manifesto speech, he said 'working people' would not pay any more tax.

Who doesn't work? People on benefits and pensioners. I can't see recipients of benefits being taxed, so that just leaves us pensioners. I hope I'm wrong, but who knows?

L. BROTHERHOOD, Waterlooville, Hants

Tax and misspend

THE Mail asks whether Labour has 'let the cat out of the bag' on tax.

I believe most people want to see public services improved; that is what taxes pay for. And don't forget, the Conservatives have raised taxes to their highest postwar level while running down the NHS, schools and the justice system, failing to regulate water companies and not fulfilling their promise to fix the problem of social care.

MICHAEL MILLER, Sheffield

Prisons full

A FORTNIGHT ago, former Home Secretary Lord Blunkett wrote an article in the Mail about the state of our prisons.

I recall reading a very similar article in 1980. At the time I was in trouble with the police, who jokingly told me I wouldn't do jail time because the prisons were all full.

So has it taken Mr Blunkett 44 years to realise there is a problem?

Maybe in another 44 years' time, a politician will decide there is an immigration problem.

B.K. BROWN, Gran Canaria, Spain

Verbal vices

I WONDER if Clare Balding had a bet with someone on how many times she could say 'hugely' in her Trooping the Colour commentary. If she did, she must have won. Hugely.

Mrs M. BLAKEMORE, Warrington, Cheshire

MUCH as I enjoy listening to Vernon Kay on his morning Radio 2 show, I do wish he could restrict himself to saying 'preeshate that' no more than 25 times per programme.

BARRY G. PRICE, Wolverhampton, W. Mids

Helmet sense

GORDON RAMSAY'S advice to cyclists, after his recent accident, to always wear a helmet is the most important thing he has ever said.

A cycle helmet saved my life and I know other cyclists who are only alive today because they had the sense to protect themselves properly. Never get on a bike without one. If you do, you might not be alive to regret it but your distraught family will.

JOHN MATTHEWS, Middlesbrough, N. Yorks

CELEBRATE THE LIFE OF A LOVED ONE

HAVE you lost a relative or friend in recent months whose life you'd like to celebrate? Our column on Friday's letters page tells the stories of ordinary people who lived extraordinary lives. Email a 450-word tribute and a favourite photo to: *lives@dailymail.co.uk* **or write to: Extraordinary Lives, Daily Mail, 9 Derry Street, London W8 5HY, including your phone number.**

Round in circles

I RANG my local GP surgery and was added to the telephone queue system as usual.

Finally reaching the top of the list, I chose 'call back' and held my mobile in my hand for five minutes, so as not to miss the call.

When it rang, a voice informed me that the surgery had sent me a text. My mobile buzzed and the text advised me that the surgery had sent me a voicemail.

Feeling confused, I listened to the voicemail, which said that if I still needed them, to please ring back.

If those poor migrants knew the true state of our NHS, they might not bother risking their lives to get here.

C. YORK, Worthing, W. Sussex

Blasting Britain

STEPHEN GLOVER, in his piece on the delicious irony of zealous anti-Brexiteers having to confront their beloved EU falling to the 'hard Right' (Mail), quotes George Orwell in 1940. But Orwell's words were presaged by that greatest of English librettists, Sir W.S. Gilbert: 'The idiot who praises with enthusiastic tone/All centuries but this and every country but his own' (The Mikado, 1885).

PHILLIP BRIAN, Bournemouth, Dorset

Stow that phone

CLARA GASPAR'S article on the theft of her iPhone and the aftermath (Mail), with vile threats from foreign criminals across the globe, made terrifying reading.

Yet if people didn't walk around with their phones in their hands and kept the damn things safely out of sight, there would be less opportunity for thieves.

After all, you wouldn't walk around waving £1,000 in notes or keep them carelessly shoved in a pocket.

People must use their common sense and awareness. If you call for a cab, do it inside the venue or shop you are in, then put the phone away in an inside pocket or closed bag.

BARBARA KNIGHT, Epping, Essex

Out-of-body moment

BACK in 1965, I was expecting my second child.

I was well into the second stage of labour and after 16 hours managed to sign for a Caesarean, as the baby and I were so distressed.

I was then floating down a long green corridor, while someone shouted at me to breathe. I remember taking a deep breath and lifting a very heavy weight off my chest.

I am sure this was an out-of-body experience. The baby was born asphyxiated, with the umbilical cord wrapped several times round her neck, but we both managed to survive.

PATRICIA TAYLOR, Bexley, Kent

ABOUT 67 years ago, I was in the middle of taking my O-levels.

As a line of us candidates walked down the school corridor in single file

Will we remember the fallen for ever?

THE commemorations of the 80th anniversary of D-Day have finished and the usual refrain that 'we will never forget' was repeated.
The sacrifices of D-Day have never been properly taught in schools. Years ago, we heard about them from people who had lived through those times but today that is no longer the case.
Our educational institutions suffer from 'Fawlty Towers syndrome' — don't mention the war. When it is discussed, it is a sanitised version: we were fighting Nazis, not Germans.
Most Germans were not members of the Nazi Party but overwhelmingly supported Hitler for the first three years of the war (while they thought they were winning).
Unless things change, we will forget.

GERRY LESTER, Stone, Staffs

FURTHER to the letter from Mr K. Morris about the Malaya conflicts never being remembered, I should like to point out that the Northern Ireland conflict was the longest-running campaign ever conducted by the British military, yet our efforts have always gone unrecognised and the authorities didn't even think we deserved a campaign medal.
It was not seen as a war by the British Government, although in those early years our soldiers struggling to keep the peace in the Province suffered a great many casualties.
Not only do we rarely get a mention but, decades on, some of our veterans face charges of murder while former terrorists are allowed to walk free without fear of punishment for their terrible crimes.

STEVE CORBETT, Warrington, Cheshire

Poignant: Molly Horrocks at her father Edward Henry Simpson's grave, with the 'little soldier'

AFTER the D-Day commemorations, I wonder whether there might be something to remember those who lost their lives in the Expeditionary Force, at the start of World War II.
My father, a lance corporal in the Lincolnshire Regiment, was killed near Dunkirk on May 19, 1940, aged 35.
I was seven years old and my stepfather didn't allow me to talk about my father. But later in life my daughter and I decided to trace where he was buried and we found his grave in Etaples, in France.
My mother had knitted a little soldier, which I have to this day.

MOLLY HORROCKS, Ogmore-by-Sea, Vale of Glamorgan

to an exam, I found I was walking beside myself, yet I could see me clearly still in the queue of girls. I 'became one' again when we reached the hall door.
I still remember this vividly, even after all these years.

JAN BYERS, Eaglescliffe, Co Durham

Flood premonition

FURTHER to previous letters about inexplicable experiences, my husband was upstairs showering when I saw water gushing through the kitchen ceiling.
I shouted to him to stop but when he rushed downstairs, there was not a drop of water to be seen. Everywhere was bone dry.
A couple of weeks later, though, water did pour through the kitchen ceiling while he was showering.
Could my premonition possibly have prevented the water damage to the ceiling?

BRENDA SMITH, Port Talbot, Glamorgan

Nutty names

I CAN probably top Roger Vince (Letters). Bearing in mind that my Christian name (or indeed the surname) can be spelt Steven or Stephen, I always stress that my name is the former.
In a pharmacy to collect my prescription, I said as usual 'Steven — with a V — Adams' and watched the assistant write on her pad, 'Steven Whithervee Adams'.

STEVEN ADAMS, Gosport, Hants

MY FATHER'S name was Frank Smith. Buying a suit for my wedding, he gave his name as Mr F. Smith. When he collected it, the suit was labelled for 'Mr Ephsmith'.

JEAN WOOD, Folkestone, Kent

I ONCE arrived with a delivery to a tractor plant in Basildon, Essex, and was asked my name so I could be given an admittance pass.
Being used to having my surname corrupted with an additional 'e', I told the gate man 'Sharp, no e'. When I produced the document at the receiving bay, I found I had been fashionably hyphenated to 'Sharp-Knoe'.

JOHN SHARP, Reading, Berks

WHEN I was a young sales rep, I had difficulty remembering customers' names, so I used name/image association as a memory-jogger.
This worked well until I spent a whole morning referring to a Mr Dunlop, who later took me aside and politely advised me that his name was actually Goodyear.

DAVID BUNN, Lee-on-the-Solent, Hants

LETTER OF THE WEEK

WIN our Letter Of The Week Magic Mug, courtesy of Printer Pix. These reveal our Daily Mail Letter Of The Week design when hot. To create personalised photo gifts (see example, right), visit printerpix.co.uk. The Letters Editor will announce the Letter Of The Week each Friday. Write to: Daily Mail, Letters, 9 Derry Street, London W8 5HY or email letters@dailymail.co.uk, including your full postal address and telephone number.

Printerpix

DEBATE: Should children have smartphones?

I COMPLETELY agree with Tanya Gold (Inspire) about not letting her 11-year-old son have a smartphone. Why do children need a smartphone?
A non-smart Nokia phone is quite suitable for them to call parents, or for parents to phone children to check where they are.
Smartphones have turned children into screen addicts and given them access to sites that a young person should not visit.
For years, the older generation have said these phones are dangerous for the developing minds of the young, so good for the 17 schools in Southwark that are banning smartphone use in school hours — how can teachers teach when pupils are looking at their phones all day?
Personally, I think smartphones should be illegal until the user is 16 years of age. Let children be children, instead of creating a muted society of the future.

JUNE KARTRIEBER, Cheam, Surrey

I ECHO Tanya Gold's thoughts. Several weeks ago, I was on the bus heading to work. There were only a few other passengers.
There was a young mother and her baby, aged about nine months, in a pushchair facing Mum. Opposite them, two ladies were engaged in a happy, lively conversation. The baby's mother was looking at her phone and the baby was looking around the bus. His eye caught the hand movements of the ladies chatting and he started to copy them with his own hands. It was very cute but Mum didn't look up.
He then spotted me smiling at his actions and smiled back at me. I waved and he lifted his arm in a wave back, still smiling. Mum didn't look up once.
When we reached my stop, I walked past the baby, said bye-bye and gave a final little wave.
Mum still never looked up. She missed a lot of lovely interaction from her little one. What a shame.

GRACE JACKSON, Whittle-le-Woods, Lancs

Straight to the POINT

■ IF LABOUR wins and Sir Keir for any reason is incapacitated, Angela would be PM. Yikes.
TOM CORAM, Lyme Regis, Dorset

■ VOTE Labour for a poorer, colder, more crowded Britain.
JIM WEDGBURY, Ashford, Kent

■ THE potential Labour Cabinet don't have a business brain between them.
JOHN LOWARCH, Oswestry, Shropshire

■ PRINCE PHILIP once asked Tom Jones if he gargled with pebbles. If he did, it clearly worked.
ROB WILLIAMS, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex

■ RISHI must announce he'll resign a week after the election, or the Tories will be out of power for 20 years.
ARSHAD KHAN, Crawley, W. Sussex

■ DISAPPOINTED Tory voters should consider the words of Hilaire Belloc: Always keep a-hold of Nurse/For fear of finding something worse.
ROGER MASON, Leighton Buzzard, Beds

■ IF EAMONN HOLMES is so ill, why is he still working? Surely not for the money.
H. WOODS, Chilton, Co Durham

■ MY MUM used to ask why party election promises didn't come under the Trade Descriptions Act, like her vacuum cleaner did.
JOHN WARD, Spalding, Lincs

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

Compiled by Charles Legge

The mourning glory of black

QUESTION When did black become de rigueur for funerals?

BLACK was the colour for mourning dress dating back to the Roman Empire, when the *toga pulla*, made of dark-coloured wool, was worn. However, in Britain, white or brown was worn by commoners. Black or purple was reserved for the nobility.

There were two factors that set black apart; its cost and sumptuary laws. To achieve black or purple hues required multiple rounds of costly dyeing, using the red roots of madder and the blue leaves of woad. Sumptuary laws imposed a fine on those attempting to copy the fashion choices of the nobility.

For the nobility, funeral garb was an expression of both wealth and fashion. After the deaths of her father-in-law, mother and first husband, Francis II of France between July 1559 and December 1560, Mary, Queen of Scots wore a form of mourning called *en deuil blanc*, involving a white pleated cambric veil.

By the Georgian era, sumptuary laws were abolished and wealthy commoners began to wear black as a status symbol.

Black became customary in the West in all classes thanks to Queen Victoria. When her husband Prince Albert died in 1861, she wore black clothing for the remaining 40 years of her life.

Corinne Jackson, Liverpool

QUESTION How involved were the Mafia in the American music industry?

THE MAFIA had a hand in various aspects of the music industry but never gained any particular control of major record companies. From the 1920s, the Mafia owned or controlled many nightclubs and venues where artists performed, especially in cities like New York.

Funeral garb: Mary, Queen of Scots in mourning dress

In the 1940s, over two thirds of all record sales were aimed at the jukebox industry. These proved a perfect way to launder money. It is said the Mob accountant Meyer Lansky controlled 'every Wurlitzer jukebox in the New York area' through the Emby Distributing Co.

However, the figure most often connected to both pop music and organised crime was the impresario Morris Levy.

Levy founded the legendary Birdland jazz club, regularly hosting names like Charlie Parker and Count Basie. He owned a record-pressing factory and the Strawberries Records & Tapes stores but soon recognised that the real money was to be made in music publishing.

To that end, he founded Roulette Records and various minor labels, producing a mix of pop, R'n'B and jazz. He became notorious for hiding profits or falsely claiming writing credits while allegedly laundering money for New York's Genovese crime family.

One of his 'victims' was Tommy James of Tommy James and the Shondells fame, who had major hits with the songs Mony Mony and I Think We're Alone Now. James, in his book Me, The Mob, And The Music, estimated that Levy had fiddled him out of $40million in royalties. He accused Levy of strong-arming artists into terrible contracts, buying up the rights to old hits and suing anyone who infringed on his copyright.

Morris Levy's career came to an end in 1988 when he was convicted for conspiring to extort John LaMonte, a Philadelphia-area record distributor, and sentenced to ten years in jail. Bail was set at $3million. Levy lost his appeal in 1990 and died before he could go to prison.

Jack Cox, Morecambe, Lancs

QUESTION Were plebs able to reach the higher echelons of Roman society?

THERE were three principal classes in Roman society: the patricians (aristocrats and elites), the plebeians (free common citizens) and the slaves (individuals without rights).

There were routes for a plebeian to enter the patrician class. A plebeian could be adopted into a patrician family if there were no male heirs. The Roman law of succession recognised a *heres necessarius*, a necessary heir, usually the eldest son, who would inherit the bulk of the estate. A patrician would adopt a son, often his own with one of his slaves, or from one of his favoured plebeian clients, to continue his legacy.

Under the Empire, a plebeian could also be ennobled by imperial decree (*per rescriptum principis*). This might happen when a city senate had too few members.

Plebeians could also reach high levels in Roman society without promotion to the patrician class. Prominent plebeian families regularly held the Consulship and were influential in the Senate. For example, Gaius Marius was a successful military leader and a plebeian who became a consul seven times. Cicero was a plebeian who rose to become a consul and one of Rome's greatest orators and statesmen.

Mr C. Greenwood, Solihull, West Midlands

■ IS THERE a question to which you want to know the answer? Or do you know the answer to a question here? Write to: Charles Legge, Answers To Correspondents, Daily Mail, 9 Derry Street, London W8 5HY; or email charles.legge@dailymail.co.uk. A selection is published, but we're unable to enter into individual correspondence.

QUESTIONS

Q: Is the Russian word for station, vokzal, related to Vauxhall in London?
Mrs S. O. Moore, Bournemouth

Q: Have exit polls ever been proved wrong?
Nick Fletcher, Malton, North Yorkshire

Q: Which was the last battle to be fought on Scottish soil?
Ian Kenney, Kelso, Borders

TODAY'S RECIPE: Noodle salad with sesame dressing

Easy, healthy lunch with 3 of your 5-a-day. Serves 2.

Ingredients

- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 wholewheat noodle nests (about 100g)
- 160g sugar snap peas
- 4 small clementines, peeled
- 60g shredded carrots
- Large handful of coriander, chopped
- 50g roasted unsalted cashews

For the dressing:

- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tsp tamari
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped

Method

1 Mix all the dressing ingredients together in a large bowl, then stir in the onion. Meanwhile, cook the noodles in a pan of boiling water for 5 mins, adding the sugar snap peas halfway through the cooking time — the noodles and peas should be just tender. Drain, cool under cold running water and drain again. Snip or cut the noodles into smaller lengths to make them more manageable to eat.

2 Tip the noodles and peas into the bowl with the dressing. Stir in the clementines, carrots, coriander and cashews. Toss to combine, then serve or pack into rigid airtight containers to take to work. Will keep chilled for a day.

ADVERTISEMENT FEATURE

Make deliveries first class

IS THERE anything more frustrating than missing a delivery to your front door? The driver knocks loudly and probably a little impatiently. They've got hundreds of parcels to distribute in a few hours — and you know you probably have less than a minute to get to the door before they head off for their next drop.
But you're in another part of the house and aches, pains or just being that bit slower these days means it'll probably take you a while to get there.
So you carefully make your way down the stairs, calling to the driver to wait.
You get to the door, open it and, of course, they've gone.
Now you're going to have the inconvenience of rearranging the delivery. Or it may be a parcel that you'll have to go to the Post Office depot to collect. What a hassle!
Instead of risking life and limb rushing down the stairs, a Stiltz Homelift can transport you between floors in just 30 seconds, plenty of time to catch the delivery driver and sign for your parcel without holding him up.
What's more, because a Stiltz is so flexible with installation locations, it may be possible to fit it in the hallway, close to the front door. This will make receiving any deliveries much easier, quicker and safer. Say goodbye to the dreaded 'sorry we missed you' cards on the doormat for good — thanks to a Stiltz Homelift.

Picture: STILTZ HOMELIFTS

Baths that are more like spas

A WALK-IN bathtub can revolutionise your bathing. These baths have a watertight door that allows easy entry and exit.
So there's no longer any need to step over a high ledge, reducing the risk of slips and falls and boosting independence.
Walk-in bathtubs also enhance comfort. Many come with supportive built-in seating, which allows users to sit comfortably while bathing. The ergonomic design ensures a relaxing experience, making these tubs an excellent choice for those with joint pain or arthritis.
And features such as hydrotherapy jets can provide therapeutic benefits, helping to soothe sore muscles and improve circulation. These provide a spa-like experience at home, offering relief from aches and pains.
A bath lift can be added if needed, to help users get in and out of the tub. This is a great option for those who have difficulty standing or moving.
There are small tubs available for compact bathrooms, as well as larger models. And customisable features such as grab bars, adjustable showerheads and anti-slip flooring are often available.
Walk-in baths provide independence and peace of mind, allowing users to bathe comfortably without assistance, maintaining dignity and privacy.
With years of experience, the team at EA Mobility is well-versed in the latest advances in walk-in baths, ensuring you receive the best possible solution for your needs, and enjoy a hassle-free installation experience.

Picture: EA MOBILITY

Simple to store and transport

Picture: ELITE MOBILITY

IF YOU'RE planning summer travels and need a mobility scooter to get around, it's best to choose one that is portable, foldable and lightweight.
Some airlines have restrictions on weight and size, so keep this in mind. And a lithium battery must not be over 300w, which restricts you to ten miles on a single charge.
An excellent choice is the game-changing Zeo Autofold carbon folding 4mph mobility scooter (above), from Elite Mobility. This light and durable carbon fibre scooter features an automatic folding system, making it easy to pack up when you're on the move.
It folds down to a super-compact size without any tools needed and weighs around the same as a standard microwave. So it's simple to store and transport and fits in most car boots with ease.

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Bankers' bonanza as JP Morgan lifts bonus cap

By *Leah Montebello*

UK bankers at JP Morgan could be paid bonuses worth up to ten times their salary as it becomes the latest to lift its cap on bonuses.

The Wall Street titan has scrapped previous rules which were introduced by Brussels that limited bonuses to two times an employee's annual salary.

It means an employee earning a salary of £200,000 a year at JP Morgan might receive a pay out on top of that of up to £2m as opposed to the previous £400,000 cap.

This follows a similar overhaul by rival Goldman Sachs, which is now allowing its top UK traders and dealmakers to earn bonuses that are as much as 25 times their base salary. A JP Morgan spokesman said: 'We believe we have developed one of the most attractive and balanced pay structures in the industry.

'Fixed pay will remain very competitive, and we will have ample room to reward the highest performers appropriately.'

Executives at the bank, which employs around 22,000 staff in the UK, believe the move will help retain and lure top talent.

The bank is not expected to cut fixed pay for existing staff.

The bonus cap rules were first introduced by the European Union in 2014 to curb excessive risk-taking in the industry.

However, opponents of the rule said it simply meant that base salaries were ramped up by banks. Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey has previously described the policy as 'misguided'.

The Government lifted its longtime cap on bankers' bonuses last year as part of a post-Brexit shake-up of City rules.

Goldman last month said its move was driven by a desire to reward success and make Britain more appealing for star bankers. There are around 6,000 workers at Goldman's London office.

The changes may give London an edge over EU financial capitals such as Paris and Amsterdam, which have been desperate to try to steal London's crown is Europe's leading financial centre.

£18m FOR STAFF

WARHAMMER maker Games Workshop has dished out £18m to its staff after bumper profits.

The games manufacturer said it would share cash payments 'on an equal basis to each member of staff'.

If split between its 2,700-strong workforce, each employee would receive near to £6,700. The group said yesterday that its profits for the year to June 2 would be at least £200m – 17pc higher than last year's £171m haul.

Despite inflation falling to 2pc for first time in three years…

Blow for borrowers as summer interest rate cut hopes fade

By *John-Paul Ford Rojas*

HOPES of a summer interest rate cut faded further yesterday despite inflation falling to its 2pc target for the first time in nearly three years.

The Bank of England is widely expected to leave rates on hold when officials meet today.

And despite the cheer provided by yesterday's inflation figures, markets are increasingly convinced they will remain at the same level at their next meeting in August.

That is likely to disappoint millions of borrowers after the Bank – run by governor Andrew Bailey (*pictured*) – strongly hinted earlier in the year that a summer rate cut was on the cards.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed consumer price index (CPI) inflation fell to 2pc in May, down from 2.3pc in April. It means that the UK has beaten both the eurozone and the US in the race to bring down inflation. In the single currency area it is 2.6pc and in America 3.3pc.

UK WINS INFLATION RACE

UK	Eurozone	US
2pc	2.6pc	3.3pc

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said it was evidence that his economic policies were working and urged voters not to 'put all that progress at risk with Labour'.

But despite the inflation target being achieved, markets see a 95pc chance that rates will remain on hold today. And the chances of an August cut have been reduced to less than 30pc.

Instead, traders are betting that the first move from the Bank will come in September with one further cut likely by the end of the year. That is because inflation in the services sector – which rate-setters have said they are closely monitoring – is proving tougher to bring down than the headline rate.

At 5.7pc in May, it was higher than economists had expected.

The Bank also predicts that headline CPI will move up again later this year. It is also wary of strong wage growth – at 6pc – which could stoke further price rises. Yet hitting the 2pc inflation target – for the first time since July 2021 – still represents a watershed moment after a prolonged crisis when it soared to more than 11pc in the autumn of 2022.

That was spurred by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which pushed up energy and food prices.

Food inflation had reached a staggering 19.2pc in March last year but has come down to 1.7pc, the lowest level since October 2021. Deutsche Bank economist Sanjay Raja said: 'The UK has won the race in getting headline CPI back to target – even if temporarily. While calls for an imminent rate cut will grow, given headline CPI's descent to 2pc, there's likely to be growing concerns around the stickiness surrounding services inflation.'

Today's decision will be particularly closely scrutinised because rate-setting officials, who normally signpost their thinking to the markets via regular speeches, have been silent since the General Election was called.

Lansdown: £5.4 billion takeover is 'bittersweet'

By *Jessica Clark*

HARGREAVES Lansdown's co-founder has described its sale to private equity buyers as 'bittersweet' as he voiced concerns about their intentions.

Stephen Lansdown, who has a 5.7pc stake in the investment platform, has backed the £5.4bn offer by a consortium of investors led by buyout giant CVC.

His comments came after HL's board said this week it would accept the £11.40 per share deal.

Directors previously rejected three approaches – including one worth £4.7bn – from the group which as well as CVC includes Nordic Capital and Platinum Ivy, owned by the Abu Dhabi sovereign wealth fund.

HL's biggest shareholder, co-founder Peter Hargreaves, 77, told the Mail on Tuesday that he would be 'very happy' to support the bid. Lansdown, 71, yesterday told the BBC that the takeover of the firm he co-founded in 1981 was 'bittersweet'.

'We don't know if they're long-term'

'At this point in time it's a fair value as long as the conditions of the sale are correct,' he said.

He added that the board 'has done a good job' but said he 'naturally has concerns about private equity'. Lansdown said that private equity firms 'find something they think is good value that they can then invest into and grow to a certain size and move on again'.

He added: 'We don't know if they're looking long term or if in five years' time they'll move on again.'

HL, which floated in 2007, is the country's biggest investment platform with nearly 2m customers.

Banks lose risk appetite

Alex Brummer
CITY EDITOR

THE willingness of broking and investor platform Hargreaves Lansdown to throw itself on the mercy of a random group of financial barons speaks volumes to the lack of ambition of British executives.

Considering London is a leading global banking centre, the lack of vision among our home grown banks is pathetic.

Hargreaves co-founder Stephen Lansdown has reminded the company's shareholders and customers that private equity and sovereign wealth fund ownership may not be ideal.

Across the world, banks are starting to look beyond the great financial crisis. In Spain, BBVA has gone hostile in its pursuit of Sabadell the owner of Britain's TSB.

Having made a splash in Italy with its digital consumer banking offer, BBVA is to offer its online service in Germany.

In the UK, Debbie Crosbie at Nationwide, not long in the job, is seeking to offer consumers a broader choice of banking with mutual ownership through its £2.9bn offer to buy Virgin Money. The deal has been badly handled in that Nationwide members deserved a vote. But the goals are laudable.

Contrast this with the stultifying dullness of NatWest and Lloyds post the financial crisis and government shareholdings. Lloyds long ago ridded itself of the state shareholding and NatWest is now well advanced in the same direction. Both appear to have become risk averse, which largely explains why the shares sell at large discounts to their American counterparts.

Lloyds, under the late Brian Pitman, was always on the lookout for extending its offering, buying insurers such as Scottish Widows and seeking to extend its mortgage offer with the purchase of TSB.

The forced marriage with bankrupt HBOS, where Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves once worked on mortgages, took place more than 16 years ago. By now, it should have become much more of a risk taker. It is possible that Lloyds problems with fraud at the Reading branch of HBOS and NatWest's lingering shameful behaviour with its GRG restructuring operation have made both banks so risk averse that they are damaging lending and the economy.

If one of the clearing banks were, for instance, to show an interest in Hargreaves Lansdown, which does offer investment opportunities in growth funds, it could make a difference to Britain's wealth creating capacity. It is high time that UK banks freed themselves from the shackles of post great financial crisis caution.

Cooked Goose

DID private equity outfit Permira make a mistake in trying to list luxury Italian sneaker maker Golden Goose in Milan?

The EU's volatile politics, in the aftermath of the European parliamentary elections, which saw the Right make gains, has cast an investment shadow over the Continent. Luxury goods tend to be an exception with France's LVMH still Europe's most valuable entities.

Shoe brands can be hopelessly erratic. Dr Martens received a glowing reception when it listed in 2021 but is having a nightmare, losing 86pc of its value following a overstocking foul-up in the US. Posh sandal seller Birkenstock is going great guns in New York with the shares up nearly 25pc since an listing putting a value of £9.4bn on the group.

Amid the turmoil in the EU maybe Golden Goose, sneaker supplier to Taylor Swift, should opt for the relative calm of the London stock exchange. After all, it has just recaptured its European leadership from France in spite of the upcoming UK General Election.

Wilson's return

CANARY Wharf could do with an injection of new thinking as leading banks such as HSBC move away. Working patterns since Covid-19 and a fightback by the City of London has left London's second financial district with a problem.

Nigel Wilson, the imaginative former chief executive of insurer Legal & General, has agreed to take over, succeeding George Iacobescu who helped pioneer the Thatcherite dream of Wall Street on the Thames.

Under Wilson's leadership, L&G forged a £4bn partnership with Oxford University, diversified into student residences and housebuilding.

His ambition is to further develop Canary Wharf as 'a city within a city' showcasing UK life sciences and providing more housing, retail and leisure. Good plan.

GOLDEN GOOSE ABANDONS £2.5 BILLION FLOAT

AN ITALIAN luxury trainer brand has insisted it has no plans to list outside Italy after a £2.5bn flotation in Milan was abandoned amid election turmoil.

Golden Goose, which counts pop singer Taylor Swift among its fans, said on Tuesday that it was postponing plans for an initial public offering in Milan due to European market volatility.

The firm, co-founded by husband and wife Alessandro Gallo and Francesca Rinaldo in 25 years ago, said 'the current market backdrop is not the right environment to take the company public'.

The company added that an initial public offering (IPO) 'will be reassessed in due course'.

A source close to Golden Goose said it had no plans to consider any other stock markets, including London.

'The "made in Italy" component of the brand is a huge part of its heritage so Milan is likely to remain the preferred location,' the source said. Golden Goose said it had received a 'very positive' response from investors to its IPO process.

Taylor-made: The popstar wears the trainers during a walk in New York

Cheers! Young's toasts rising sales as Euros kick in

By Leah Montebello

YOUNG'S has cheered a 'landmark year' as it gears up for a summer of sports, with Euro 2024 having kicked off and the Olympics to come.

The group, which owns 288 pubs and 1,066 hotel rooms across the country, posted revenues of £389m for the year to the start of April, up 5pc from the year before.

The £158m takeover of The City Pub Group in November lifted Young's. The deal added 55 pubs to take the size of its estate to 288 venues. It provided a £7.2m revenue boost in a month after completing at the start of March. Profits hit £49.4m, up 9pc from the prior year.

Boss Simon Dodd said the takeover was 'a real milestone' after a 'landmark year'.

The group has invested £84.5m across its pub and hotel estate during the year.

This included £36.5m on eight individual acquisitions and a further £48m on giving 35 existing pubs makeovers.

Game on: Fans flock to pubs

The festive period saw both its best week ever for sales just before Christmas itself, and its best ever single day on December 15. And while January blues hit sales, Young's was lifted throughout the Six Nations in February and Cheltenham festival in March. An earlier Easter, which gave it two Easter weekends in the same the financial year, was also a boost.

Looking ahead, Dodd said the group 'faces some challenges' – including high inflation hitting punters – but told shareholders 'there is plenty for us to be excited about this year'.

'This summer we have a festival of sport, starting with the Euros, Wimbledon and the Olympics, followed by the return of the Autumn rugby internationals which provides a fantastic opportunity given our rugby heritage,' he said.

Despite the poor weather, total sales for the last nine weeks were up 24pc year-on-year.

Young's board announced a dividend of 10.88p, taking the full year payout 6pc higher to 21.76p 'reflecting our strong profit performance and positive outlook,' the company said.

Douglas Jack, analyst at Peel Hunt, said the company suffers with 'one of the lowest valuations in the freehold pub sector' despite being 'one of the top performing operators'.

Overall sales were up 15pc compared to before the pandemic, which Jack said was 'materially ahead of the market'.

Telegraph swings to record loss as Barclays leave £278m black hole

By Jessica Clark

THE Telegraph newspaper swung to a record loss last year after taking a £278m hit on a loan withdrawn by its owners, the Barclay family.

A review of company finances uncovered 'potential irregularities' and attempts to trace the cash had been unsuccessful, the Telegraph Media Group said in its annual accounts.

And it warned that the cash was unlikely to be repaid.

The news organisation, which also owns The Spectator magazine, was pushed to a loss of £244.6m for the year.

An ownership crisis at the newspaper has seen the Barclay family lose control of the group amid a dispute over £1.2bn of overdue loans.

Lloyds Banking Group took over the business last year and launched a sales process. Later in 2023, RedBird IMI, an Abu Dhabi-backed fund, reached a deal with the Barclays to take control of the group by paying off the debts. But in March the Government said it would bring forward legislation to block such state-backed takeover deals in the industry. As a result, a sale process remains ongoing.

FTSE 100	FTSE 250	FTSE All Share	DOW	NIKKEI	HANG SENG	DAX	Brent Spot	Gold
8205.11	20381.05	4473.37	38834.86	38570.76	18430.39	18067.56	85.52	2328.22
13.82 0.17%	28.88 0.14%	5.42 0.12%	CLOSED	88.65 0.23%	514.84 2.87%	64.41 0.36%	0.26 0.30%	1.55 0.07%
H:8445.80 L:7256.94	H:20900.49 L:16783.09	H:4596.71 L:3933.17	H:40077.40 L:32327.20	H:40888.43 L:30526.88	H:20078.94 L:14961.18	H:18869.36 L:14687.41	H:91.17 L:77.52	H:2427.52 L:2051.86

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Can $ 1.66	Euro € 1.13	NZ $ 1.93	Sw Fr 1.07	US $ 1.22

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Housebuilders hurt as buyers wait for rate cuts

MARKET REPORT

By Emily Hawkins

HOUSEBUILDERS led the FTSE 100 fallers yesterday after **Berkeley** warned that a 'lack of urgency' in the housing market was likely to continue until interest rates begin to fall.

Higher rates have caused potential buyers to hesitate as they wait for borrowing costs to fall.

Shares in Berkeley fell 6.3pc, or 316p, to 4694p as the **FTSE 100** made steady gains, climbing 0.2pc, or 13.82 points, to 8205.11.

The **FTSE 250**, meanwhile, slid 0.1pc, or 28.88 points, to 20381.05.

Other housebuilders were also dragged down. **Persimmon** dropped 2.8pc, or 39.5p, to 1365p, **Taylor Wimpey** fell 2.5pc, or 3.65p, to 143.75p and **Barratt** tumbled 2.7pc, or 13.2p, to 468.7p.

Berkeley, which focuses on developments in London and south-east England, reported an 8pc fall in pre-tax profits to £557m. The builder said there were 'signs that the outlook is improving' but chief executive Rob Perrins warned that 'the current lack of urgency in the market is likely to remain until the long-anticipated reduction in interest rates commences'.

The housebuilders were also reacting to inflation figures which have further dampened hopes of a summer rate cut.

Also among the blue-chip losers yesterday was **AstraZeneca.** The pharma giant fell for a second day, dropping 0.6pc, or 76p, to 12340p, following the disclosure that a breast cancer drug combination had failed trials.

Smurfit Kappa led the blue-chip index, increasing by 4.8pc, or 172p, to 3750p. The packaging business has been buoyed ahead of its merger next month with Atlanta-based West Rock.

The boost came as it was confirmed the merged company will be included in the S&P Dow Jones indices in the US.

Rival **DS Smith** was also up, climbing 0.5pc, or 1.6p, to 352p.

Airline stocks were boosted by the fall in headline inflation.

'This could potentially give families more financial wiggle room to spend on booking seats for a spot in the sun,' Susannah Streeter, head of money and markets at investment platform Hargreaves Lansdown said.

'It's more encouraging for airlines as there have been signs of consumers starting to baulk at higher ticket prices.' British Airways owner **IAG** rose 1.2pc, or 2p, to 170.05p and **EasyJet** nudged up 0.7pc, or 3p, to 455.1p.

Royal carpet maker **Victoria** bounced after its auditors gave it a clean bill of health. Last year they had flagged concerns over a subsidiary, citing worries over money laundering rules. Shares climbed 2.1pc, or 3.6p, to 175.6p.

Vodafone edged higher as it continues to help clear the way for its proposed merger with Three. It sold a bigger than anticipated stake of 18pc in Indian telecommunications firm, Indus Towers. It now holds a 3.1pc stake.

This will raise £1.4bn, which Vodafone will mostly use to pay down its £1.5bn debt pile relating to its Indian assets. Shares climbed 1.4pc, or 1p, to 71.64p. The watchdog is probing its £15bn merger with Three, owned by Hong Kong group CK Hutchison.

STOCK WATCH

Arrow Exploration

Pence

26

24

22

20

18

16

2023

2024

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■ SHARES in oil and gas business Arrow Exploration soared after an optimistic update about one of its Colombian projects.

The AIM-listed company said production from its first horizontal well Carrizales Norte prospect in eastern Colombia had exceeded expectations.

The business said the technology proven by this well boded well for further projects in the same area. Shares increased 15pc, or 3p, to 23p.

TOP RISERS

	CLOSING PRICE	DAILY CHANGE	REASON
Games Workshop	10,300p	+9.17%	Bumper profits
JTC	955p	+6.23%	Broker upgrade
Smurfit Kappa	3750p	+4.81%	Merger looming
CMC Markets	281p	+4.46%	Fintech deal
Future	1032p	+3.72%	Share buyback

TOP FALLERS

	CLOSING PRICE	DAILY CHANGE	REASON
Helios Towers	113.6p	-7.79%	Investor sell-off
Berkeley	4694p	-6.31%	Rates hopes dashed
Renishaw	3890p	-5.70%	Industry woes
Spectris	3026p	-5.67%	Profit warning
Essentra	164.6p	-3.74%	Rally fades

	52-week		High	Low
Aerospace & Defence				
Aston Martin	143⅞	-1¼	395⅞	132⅞
BAE Systems	1350½	+5½	1400	888¼
Chemring Gp	382	+2½	396	259
QinetiQ	457¼	+6¾	460⅛	292¾
Rolls-Royce	472½	+4⅞	473⅞	145¼
Senior	164⅞	+4¾	180⅞	154¼
TI Fluid Systems	133⅜xd	-⅛	169¼	115¼
Banks				
Banco Santander	374		414	260½
Bank of Georgia	3815	-20	5420	2650
Barclays	206¼	+¼	220	129¼
HSBC Hldgs	693xd	+6½	720¾	575¾
Lloyds Banking	55¼	+¼	56⅞	39¾
NatWest Group	312½	+2¼	326⅞	176⅞
Stan Chartered	722		785¼	573¾
TBC Bank	2480xd	+45	3465	2330
Virgin Money UK	215¼	+⅛	216¼	141⅞
Beverages				
Barr (AG)	599	+1	623	451½
Britvic	969½xd	+5½	1018	785½
C&C Group	154⅞	-4¼	176⅞	123⅜
Coca-Cola HBC	2686xd	-2	2804	2065
Diageo	2569	+11	3457	2558
Chemicals				
Croda Intnal	4114	-27	5956	4059
Elementis	145⅜		156⅞	97⅜
Johnson Matt	1546xd	-14	1870	1446½
Victrex	1166xd		1595	1126
Construction & Materials				
Balfour Beatty	356⅜xd	-2	386¼	295⅝
Breedon	386	-1½	403	304½
CRH	6064xd	-50	6898	4151
Genuit Group	440½	-4½	474½	261½
Grafton Gp	949⅜	+5⅝	1023	751
Ibstock	159⅞	-1¼	172¾	120⅞
Keller Group	1272xd	+16	1376	673
Kier Group	140		149⅝	74⅝
Marshalls	306½xd	+½	329½	198
Tyman	357	+1	396½	236
Volution	448½	+5½	461½	336⅞
Electricity				
Drax Gp	514	+8½	619¾	401½
SSE	1805½	+5½	1896	1508
Electronic & Electrical Equipment				
Halma	2616	-40	2664	1810½
Morgan Advanced	313½	-4½	331	218½
Oxford Instruments	2640	+10	2730	1712
Renishaw	3890	-235	4370	2950
Spectris	3026xd	-182	3807	2935
Equity Investment Instruments				
3i Infrastructure	328	+3	348	278½
Aberforth Smlr Cos	1500	-12	1544	1126
AJ Bell	386½xd	+1	403	249
Alliance Trust	1198xd		1264	988
Allianz Tech	402	+5	402	246
Apax Global	156	+1⅛	185	139
Asia Dragon	407	+9	414	325
AVI Global Trust	236		248	185
Baillie Giff Japan	716	-2	793	641
Bankers InvTst	113¼	+⅛	117	92¼
BBGI Global	133⅞	-¼	143	122
Bellevue Hlthcare	139¼	-¼	157⅝	120¼
BH Macro	361½	+5½	386	328
BlackRock Smlr	1486xd	+2	1512	1146
BlkRckWldMining	562xd	+8	631	492½
Bluefield Solar	106xd	+⅛	123⅜	97⅞
BR Greater Eur	619xd	-1	650	466
Caledonia Inv	3505	+65	3660	3110
City of London IT	417½	+2	428	371½
Edin Inv Trust	725xd	+5	742	615
Edin Wwide	141¼	-⅛	157	122⅜
Euro Sml Co.	179⅞	-1¼	188⅝	136
European Opp	877	-6	915	743
F&C Inv Trust	1014		1050	831
Fidelity China	219	+3½	243	182⅝
Fidelity Emg	694	+14	720¼	569
Fidelity Eur	392		411	311½
Fidelity Spec Val	304xd	+3	311½	252½
Finsbury G&I Tst	846	+1	914	792
Foresight Solar	89⅞	+2	102¼	81⅛
GCP Infra Inv	77¼	-¼	83	60
Global Smaller	161⅛	-¼	167⅝	129
Greencoat UK	133½	-½	151¼	127¼
Harbourvest	2485	+10	2485	2025
Henderson Sml Co	863		890	629
Herald Inv Trust	2220	+10	2220	1596
HG Capital Trust	490		499	353½
HICL Infr	125¼xd	-¼	139⅝	117¼
Hipgnosis Songs	102	-¼	105⅝	57⅞
ICG Enterprise	1258	+6	1262	1046
Impax Enviro Mkts	394	+2	417	334½
JPM American	999xd	+6	999	741
JPM Emerg Mkt	106¾	+⅛	108¼	96⅝
JPM Euro Disc	458		485	354½
JPM Indian IT	981	-2	983	798
JPM Japan IT	520		553	438½
Jupiter Fund	79¼	+¼	115	73½
Law Debenture	850xd		897	721
M&G	203½	-¼	238¼	183
Mercantile IT	234½		248	177¾
Merchants Trust	564	+3	591	477½
Molten Ventures	401½	-9½	411	208¾
Monks Inv Tst	1170	-12	1194	890
Morgan Sindall	2630		2640	1706
Murray Inc Tst	864	+3	898	770
Murray Intl Tst	252½	+½	258	219
NB Private Equity	1608	+8	1714	1510
Next Energy Solar	76½xd	-⅛	98⅝	70¼
Ninety One	170	-⅛	186¼	156¾
Octopus Renew	72¼	+¼	96¼	66
Pacific Horizon	627	-1	657	512
Pantheon Intl	309½	-1	334	245½
Patria Private	570	+3	580	418
Pershing Square	4304	-2	4372	2704
Personal Assets Tr	489	+1	491½	458
Polar Cap Tech	3400	+60	3400	2105
Renewables Infra	97¼xd	-¼	119¾	96¼
RIT Cap Partners	1824	+8	2010	1718
Schroder Asia	533	+7	533	456
Schroder Oriental	273½	+3½	278½	234½
Scot American Inv	514xd	+6	536	452
Scottish Mortgage	877⅜xd	-19⅜	904¼	637⅝
Sequoia Econ Infra	77⅝	+1⅛	85½	71
Smithson Inv	1366	-8	1432	1170
Syncona	113⅜	+¼	159	106¼
Templeton Em	163	+2	165⅝	141
Twentyfour	103	+¼	107⅜	94¼
Vietnam Enter	596	-1	654	518
VinaCapital Vietna	498	+1½	498	426
Witan Invest	262	+½	270	210½
Wwide Healthcare	351½xd	-3½	358½	288
Food Producers				
Assoc Brit Foods	2476xd	-19	2738	1929½
Bakkavor	146		151	81
Cranswick	4435	-20	4465	3170
Hilton Food Gp	900xd	+12	942	623
Premier Foods	165¼	-¼	176¼	113¼
Tate & Lyle	677	-3	760	591
Unilever	4433	-5	4450	3694
General Financial				
3i Group	3100	+21	3100	1848
Ashmore Gp	176¼	-2⅜	232⅜	166¼
BR Throgmorton	617	-1	641	507
Bridgepoint Group	219⅝	-1⅛	289⅜	166⅜
Capital Gearing	4700xd	+20	4785	4370
Close Brothers	437¼	-10	976½	299¼
Coats Group	81⅛	-1⅛	88¾	64⅛
Foresight Group	454	-1	491	330
Hargrvs Lansdwn	1153	+23	1153	690⅝
IG Gp	816	-1½	822½	611
Integrafin	344xd		360	211⅝
Intermediate Cap	2220xd	-38	2394	1255½
Intl Public Prtnshps	125¼	-1⅛	139¼	115⅝
Investec	579½	-1½	581	429⅝
IP Group	44⅜	-¼	61⅜	43½
JTC	955xd	+56	955	627½
London Stock Ex	9536	+48	9674	7986
Man Group	247⅝	-1¾	277¾	202
Nth Atlantic Smlr	3980	+80	4190	3420
OSB Group	455⅝	+3	491⅞	280¼
Paragon	770	-6	779½	443⅜
Petershill Partners	209		213	143
Plus500	2242xd	-8	2298	1286
Quilter	122¼	+1	123	71¼
Rathbone Grp	1736	+26	1950	1458
Ruffer Investment	274½	+2½	283½	261
Schroders	374⅝	-3	464⅝	347¼
SDCL Energy	62⅜xd		79½	51¾
Temple Bar	260½xd	+3	275½	212
TP ICAP	206	-1	227½	141
Health Care Equipment & Services				
Convatec	243	-2	293⅜	196¼
Smith & Neph	990¾	+3	1268	896¼
Spire Health	235xd	-1½	266	207
Housebuilders				
Barratt Devel	468¾	-13¼	566⅞	392¼
Bellway	2532xd	-56	2860	1921
Berkeley Grp	4694	-316	5320	3773
Crest Nicholson	240	-4⅞	249¾	155⅝
Persimmon	1365	-39½	1498	960⅝
Redrow	663½	-9½	739	427⅞
Taylor Wimpey	143¾	-3⅝	152⅞	99¼
Vistry Group	1196	-8	1310	636
Industrial Transportation				
Clarkson	4195	+40	4235	2550
Intl Dist Serv	321⅛	+¼	336¼	213
Zigup	408½	-3½	438	311½
Industrials				
Bodycote	718	-9	768	555
Hill & Smith	1948xd	-14	2100	1458
IMI	1789	-11	1901	1445
Melrose Ind	575	-5	677⅛	446¾
RHI Magnesita	3220	+50	3785	2492
Rotork	329⅞	+⅛	343¾	281
Smith (DS)	352	+1⅝	413	263¼
Smiths Gp	1698	+5	1766½	1526
Smurfit Kappa Gp	3750	+172	3882	2554
Spirax Group	8405	-250	11130	4126½
Vesuvius	474		504	390¾
Weir Gp	2040	+8	2200	1675½
Leisure Goods				
Games Workshp	10300	+865	11700	9125
ME Group	170¼	-1¼	182¾	119⅝
Watches of Switz	389¾	+2¾	756	325
Life Insurance				
abrdn	144⅞	-3¼	236¾	136¼
Aviva	478¼	+4	497	369¼
Just Group	106	-1	107⅝	68¼
Legal & General	227½	+¾	256¼	205¾
Phoenix Gp	485¼	+¼	560¾	441⅛
Prudential	700⅝	+⅞	1108½	687⅞
St James Place	547	+1½	1183	402
Media				
4imprint	5930	+130	6540	4255
Ascential	338½	-1½	342	192⅝
Auto Trader Gp	813⅝	-1¼	829⅝	587
Future	1032	+37	1145	577
Informa	856⅜xd	-4⅜	860¾	685¾
ITV	76		79⅝	55¾
Mony Group	231	+4⅞	283¾	208
Pearson	965	+3⅜	1042	811
RELX	3587	-4	3591	2442
Rightmove Group	557¼	+2⅝	594¾	462⅜
WPP	735¾xd	-5	873¾	681¼
Mining				
Anglo American	2428½	+39½	2773½	1670¼
Antofagasta	2057	+10	2410	1293
Centamin	114¼xd	-⅛	130¼	78⅜
Endeavour Mining	1653	+5	1967	1250
Ferrexpo	43½		95	41½
Fresnillo	541	-1½	639½	440¼
Glencore	456⅜	+2¾	501½	369
Hochschild Mining	177⅞	-¼	188	70⅝
Rio Tinto	5236	+28	5891	4559
Nonlife Insurance				
Admiral Gp	2577	-12	2837	2029
Beazley	696½	+15½	696½	503
Direct Line Ins	198¼	-¼	225¾	133⅜
Hiscox	1149	+17	1240	938
Lancashire Hldgs	610	+6	689	538
Oil & Gas Producers				
BP	466⅜xd	-½	558	444¼
Diversified Energy	1099xd	-6	1920	9
Energean	1032xd	-22	1204	808
Harbour Energy	300⅞	+4¼	330	218¼
Ithaca Energy	126	+1¼	184¼	112
Shell	2748xd	+14½	2946	2264½
Oil Equipment & Services				
Wood Gp(J)	200	-1⅛	201¾	125¾
Pharmaceuticals & Biotechnology				
AstraZeneca	12340	-76	12600	9501
Genus	1652	-22	2506	1637
GSK	1616½xd	+4½	1812½	1316
Haleon	325½	+½	341	308½
Hikma Pharma	1977	-22	2205	1722
Indivior	1265	-3	1885	1135
Puretech	215	+½	237½	140⅝
PZ Cussons	102⅝	+¼	175¾	82⅝
Reckitt Benckiser	4397	+20	6082	4110
Real Estate				
Assura	39⅜xd	-½	49⅜	39⅛
Balanced Comm	77¼xd	-¼	84	61
Big Yellow Gp	1162	-28	1264	910
British Land	424¼	-11	444⅞	291¼
Derwent London	2298	-42	2402	1779
Empiric Student Prp	94xd	-¼	96⅝	83¾
Grainger	236xd	-3	274¾	217⅞
Grt Portland Est	337½	-7½	445¼	332
Hammerson	27⅜	-⅛	29¾	20⅞
Land Securities	609½xd	-11½	725¼	559⅝
LondonMetric Prop	194¼xd	-1¾	210¼	156⅞
Primary Hlth Prop	90¾	-1⅛	106¼	85½
Safestore Hldgs	797½	-10	913	653
Savills	1114	-24	1178	763½
SEGRO	891¼	-27⅞	940	679¼
Shaftesbury	138¼	-2¾	147⅞	102½
Sirius Real Estate	96½	-¼	101¼	78⅝
Supermarket Inc	71½	-⅛	88½	70¼
Target Healthcare	81¼	-¼	88	66½
TR Property IT	318½	-4	345	255
Tritax Big Box	152¼	-2⅜	170¼	123⅝
Tritax Eurobox	58¼xd	-⅛	63⅜	44
Unite Group	894	-12	1057	847
Urban Logistics	122⅜	-⅛	128¾	100
Workspace Gp	572	-8	604	454⅜
Retailers				
AO World	110	+1⅛	115¾	78
B&M	471	-2⅜	612⅝	463
Burberry Gp	964¼	-15⅝	2257	964¼
Currys	77⅝	+⅛	79⅝	43⅜
Dr. Martens	81	+¼	159¾	67
Dunelm Gp	1063	+6	1191	967
Frasers Group	862½		938	683
Greggs	2860	-18	2940	2282
Howden Joinery	881	+2	930½	613
Inchcape	754½xd	+1½	847	624½
JD Sports Fashion	119¾xd	+2	175⅞	104
Kingfisher	248xd	-⅛	270⅝	201¼
Marks & Spencer	302⅜xd	+1¾	311⅛	185⅞
Moonpig	159⅝	+3	187	130⅝
Next	9004	-36	9426	6582
Ocado Gp	352½	-1⅛	976⅝	342
Pets at Home Gp	301¼xd	+3¼	397⅛	254⅜
Sainsbury(J)	259⅜xd	-1¼	310⅝	245¼
SSP Group	160	-5	260¾	158¾
Tesco	308⅜xd	-⅛	315	245⅜
WH Smith	1178	-13	1680	1083
Software & Computer Services				
Auction Tech	568	-4	771	448
Baltic Classifieds	226½	-3	257	163⅝
Bytes Technology	562½	+8½	657	454
Computacenter	2908xd		2944	2026
Darktrace	576¾	-1¼	603⅝	286
Kainos Gp	1088	-12	1367	914
Playtech	460	-2	600	370
Sage Group	1078xd	+6	1282	868
Softcat	1751	-15	1766	1212
Trustpilot	223	+3½	227½	63⅜
Support Services				
Ashtead Gp	5420	+20	6104	4667
Babcock Intl	536½	-½	565½	269
Bunzl	3006xd	+8	3306	2687
DCC	5645xd	-5	6035	4171
Diploma	4134	-20	4252	2804
Essentra	164⅜xd	-6⅜	190	143⅜
Experian	3713	-7	3779	2390
Hays	101⅛		110⅝	88½
Intertek Gp	4742xd	-50	5075	3755
Intl Workplace Gp	177¼	-½	207	127⅜
Mitie Group	119⅞	+2	124¼	91⅞
Network Int	390⅜	-¼	395¼	379¼
Pagegroup	441¼xd	-4¼	498⅜	365
Rentokil Initial	450¼	-5⅜	644	392½
RS Group	726xd	-5	839⅝	660⅝
Serco	170¼	-1⅛	189¾	136⅜
Sthree	424½		440	300
Travis Perkins	807	-9	914⅜	692¼
W.A.G	67⅜	+¼	98⅝	63¾
Technology Hardware & Equipment				
discoverIE Gp	687	-10	890	593
Spirent Comms	184⅞	-⅛	200	90⅞
Telecoms				
Airtel Africa	118¾	-⅛	131⅝	90¼
BT Gp	141¼	+⅛	142½	102¼
Helios Towers	113⅜	-9⅝	129⅝	59
Telecom Plus	1856	-4	1892	1362
Vodafone Gp	71⅛xd	+1	81	63
Tobacco				
Br Am Tob	2440	+15	2735	2267
Imperial Brands	2015xd	+8	2015	1580
Travel & Leisure				
Carnival	1109½	-11½	1377	811⅛
Compass Gp	2226xd	+9	2323	1945½
Dominos Pizza	320¾	-2⅝	424⅝	275¼
easyJet	455⅛	+3	577¾	359⅞
Entain	661	-4⅝	1403½	654⅝
FirstGroup	152⅞	-2⅛	187¼	140⅝
Flutter Ent	14470	+75	17475	12155
Intercontl Htls	8252	-12	8752	5210
Intl Cons Airl	170	+2	186½	138
Mitchells & Butlers	298	-5	312½	199¼
Mobico Group	47⅞	+⅛	106⅜	46⅛
PPHE Hotel Gp	1290	+5	1495	1005
Trainline	310⅝	+2⅜	386⅝	216⅝
TUI AG	574	+2	677	402¼
Wetherspoon (JD)	735	-16½	847½	613
Whitbread	2940xd	-15	3678	2855
Wizz Air Hldgs	2348	+46	2860	1546½
Utilities				
Centrica	134⅜xd	+1½	172½	118½
National Grid	901xd	+6¾	1142½	838⅝
Pennon	600½	-3½	767	551
Severn Trent	2407xd	+16	2728	2265
United Utilities	1010	-4½	1125	900¾

*Ex-Dividend
Source: The Press Association

First-class betrayal

Meet the board members delivering 508-year-old Royal Mail into foreign hands

Czech billionaire: Daniel Kretinsky's £3.6 billion offer has received a stamp of approval

By ***Jessica Clark***

DANIEL Kretinsky stunned the City when he revealed plans to take over the owner of Royal Mail.

And it was an even bigger surprise to many when the board of International Distribution Services (IDS), the delivery business's parent company, unanimously backed the Czech billionaire's £3.6bn offer.

Royal Mail's privatisation back in 2013 had been controversial enough. But the decision by IDS's directors means the 508-year-old postal service, set up by Henry VIII, could fall into foreign hands for the first time in its history.

Chairman Keith Williams said the board were 'acutely aware of their responsibilities, particularly to the unique heritage of Royal Mail'.

But they have faced a backlash from unions and politicians.

The directors are set to pocket a total of £677,621 from the sale. Williams is in line for £210,160 and Martin Seidenberg, IDS's German chief executive, will receive £264,316, according the formal takeover offer document.

The Government and the Communication Workers Union (CWU) have sought guarantees about the future of the postal service and its workforce.

CWU general secretary Dave Ward has said the sale to a foreign owner 'doesn't feel right' as 'nothing gets more British than Royal Mail'.

Kretinsky has already made several promises, including keeping the Royal Mail name and brand, and retaining its UK headquarters and tax residency to keep it tied to Britain.

But Labour last week vowed to 'robustly scrutinise' the deal and give postal workers a 'stronger voice' in a pre-election pledge.

Shareholders will vote on the deal at IDS's next annual general meeting in September.

And the directors – custodians of an historic British institution – will urge them to allow it fall into foreign hands.

These are the board members who have agreed to the sale.

KEITH WILLIAMS
CHAIRMAN

THE former British Airways boss has chaired IDS since 2019 and has been on the board for six years in total.

Williams was hired by Royal Mail with a track record of dealing with industrial disputes that it was hoped would help settle the seemingly intractable conflict with unions at the postal services.

As a boss at British Airways he had helped diffuse a long-running row between the airline and cabin crews in 2011.

MARTIN SEIDENBERG
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

THE German businessman was tasked with a big turnaround job when he took the reins at IDS last year.

He had previously run GLS – the European parcel service also owned by IDS – since 2020 and before that spent 15 years at courier giant DHL Group.

He joined IDS with a mandate to turn the firm's fortunes around, which has included lobbying Ofcom and the Government to reform the Universal Service Obligation, which includes delivering letters from Monday to Saturday and parcels from Monday to Friday.

Plans on the table would reduce the Royal Mail's second class service to every other day.

MICHAEL SNAPE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

SNAPE was appointed as IDS' group chief financial officer in January. He was finance chief at Boots for five years. He has also held senior roles at Tesco, Waitrose and Sainsbury's.

BARONESS HOGG
SENIOR INDEPENDENT NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARONESS Hogg became the first woman to lead the board of a FTSE 100 company when she was appointed chairman of venture capital group 3i in 2002.

She stepped down in 2010 to become chairman of the Financial Reporting Council, the accounting regulator.

A veteran of company boards, she was awarded The Sunday Times' lifetime achievement award for non-executive directors in 2017.

She has also had a career in government, having been the lead independent non-executive director at the Treasury and head of the Prime Minister's policy unit under John Major.

MARIA DA CUNHA
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE trained solicitor joined the IDS board in 2019 after an 18-year career at British Airways, where she was director of people and head of legal and government and industry affairs.

Previously she sat on the board of De La Rue, the company that prints banknotes for the Bank of England.

Alongside her role at IDS, she is on the panel of the Competition and Markets Authority, the watchdog, and is a director at housing association L&Q and law firm Irwin Mitchell.

MICHAEL FINDLAY
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FINDLAY is the chairman of London Stock Exchange and of construction group Morgan Sindall. He had a 27-year career in investment banking including stints at Robert Fleming & Co, UBS and Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

LYNNE PEACOCK
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PEACOCK is a senior independent director of outsourcing Serco and deputy chairman of insurer Royal London Group.

Previously she was the chief executive of National Australia Bank Europe and led building society The Woolwich. She has sat on the boards of Standard Life Aberdeen, Scottish Water, Nationwide and TSB.

SHASHI VERMA
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VERMA is the director of strategy and chief technology officer at Transport for London.

He is responsible for the operation of London's transport revenue collection system and implemented contactless payments across TfL's network.

JOURIK HOOGHE
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HOOGHE is chief financial officer of aviation services firm Swissport International.

He has been executive vice president and finance chief at budget airline Wizz Air.

Prior to that Hooghe spent 18 years working at consumer goods giant Procter & Gamble including a time as head of global strategy.

INGRID EBNER
NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EBNER has a background in logistics, having spent 21 years at Amazon, including as director of supply chain operations in continental Europe. She is a vice president at shipping giant Maersk's e-commerce logistics arm.

MARK AMSDEN
GROUP GENERAL COUNSEL AND COMPANY SECRETARY

AMSDEN was general counsel and company secretary at Morrisons, and interim company secretary at Yorkshire Water. He was formerly a partner at law firm Addleshaw Goddard.

CHELMSFORD CITY RTV

ROBIN GOODFELLOW		GIMCRACK	
2.15	Foro Romano	2.15	Cyclonite
2.50	Dark Side Prince	2.50	Dark Side Prince
3.30	Ehtiram	3.30	Qamari
4.10	Wadacre Gomez	4.10	Tarjeeh
4.50	Night Breeze	4.50	Night Breeze
5.20	Running Star	5.20	Noodle Mission

2.15 —ART DECO 1ER CRU EBF RESTRICTED MAIDEN STAKES (5) (2-Y-O) £9,000 added (£4,187) 6f (10)

1 (4) 7 DARK THUNDERSTORM 35 Alice Haynes 9-7 K O'Neill
2 (3) 32 FORO ROMANO 58 G Boughey 9-7 T Jakes (5)
3 (9) 8 NEVER KNOW 16 J Tate 9-7 A Rawlinson
4 (8) 44 SIR PALAMEDES 27 C Fellowes 9-7 R Dawson
5 (5) 66 BEAUHAATHER 27 Miss A Murphy 9-5 Laura Pearson
6 (1) 553 CYCLONITE 16 (B) J Ferguson 9-5 D Muscutt
7 (6) 6L LIFT LADY 20 K P De Foy 9-2 J Mitchell
8 (2) 7 LOVE ROCK 15 I Mohammed 9-2 C Bennett
9 (10) 0 TELFORD 6 H Morrison 9-2 F Marsh
10 (6) SUNSHINE STATE C Johnston 9-0 J Hart

Probable SP: 2 Cyclonite, 5-2 Foro Romano, 5 Sunshine State, 8 Sir Palamedes, Never Know, 12 Lift Lady, 16 Dark Thunderstorm, 20 Beauhaather.
FAVOURITES: – – – – – – – 3 1 1
2023: Starlust 2 9 7 (Hector Crouch) 13-8 Fav R Beckett drawn (1) 12 ran.

2.50 —ESPRIT COUTURE 1ER CRU HANDICAP (4) £12,000 added (£6,281) 5f (9)

1 (8) 437162- EMPEROR SPIRIT 376 (PT) (C) R Cowell 6-10-10 D Muscutt
2 (7) 74L-504 PRINCESS SHABNAM 29 (CD) S Woods 5-9-8 Kaiya Fraser (5)
3 (1) 7-L0315 ROCKING ENDS 10 (D3BF) Tom Clover 4-9-7 J Mitchell
4 (5) 325-450 LORD RIDDIFORD 19 (C&D3D9) J & S Quinn 9-9-7 J Hart
5 (9) 8-2L53 HARRY BROWN 16 (C&D) D M Simcock 4-9-5 J Haynes
6 (3) 5-87532 ALMATY STAR 16 (P) (D) R Cowell 4-8-13 R Dawson
7 (2) 34-5111 DARK SIDE PRINCE 28 (P) (C&D5D5) Jessica Macey 7-8-8 H Shaw
8 (6) 131105 BURABACK 14 (P) (C&D) D Shaw 5-8-4 R Da Silva
9 (4) 535682 THE DEFIANT 2 (PT) (C&D2D7) L Dace 8-8-4 Mia Nicholls (5)

Probable SP: 7-2 Dark Side Prince, 4 Emperor Spirit, Almaty Star, 6 Princess Shabnam, Rocking Ends, 8 Harry Brown, 12 Buraback, 16 Lord Riddiford.
FAVOURITES & 2023: No corresponding race.

3.30 —RAOUL COLLET RESTRICTED MAIDEN FILLIES' STAKES (5) £8,000 added (£4,187) 1m 2f (12)

1 (10) 33 POSITIVIA 28 J & S Quinn 4-9-10 J Hart
2 (12) 53- EXPECTED ARRIVAL 187 K P De Foy 3-9-2 J Mitchell
3 (9) 4 LOVES LOVING 26 J & T Gosden 3-9-2 K O'Neill
4 (3) 3- QAMARI 216 J Tate 3-9-2 R Dawson
5 (11) 5-L SPRINGBECAMESUMMER 26 M Bell 3-9-2 F Marsh
6 (2) 7-9 TEATIME 51 J Chapple-Hyam 3-9-2 Laura Pearson
7 (8) 09 CHELSEA FLOWER 14 James Owen 3-9-2 J F Egan
8 (6) L4-2 EHTIRAM 23 (BF) Owen Burrows 3-9-0 D Muscutt
9 (5) 565-764 INBETWEENUS 10 (H) G Kelleway 3-9-0 J Peate (3)
10 (4) 9-7 KIMCHI 23 R Guest 3-8-12 G Rooke
11 (7) 60 LARENTA 14 J Feilden 3-8-12 R Ffrench
12 (1) 0-L MASAR WAY 23 R Guest 3-8-12 A Rawlinson

Probable SP: 3 Ehtiram, 10-3 Loves Loving, 4 Qamari, 9-2 Expected Arrival, 8 Positivia, 14 Springbecamesummer, 16 Inbetweenus, 20 Kimchi.
FAVOURITES: – – – – – – – 3 0 3 AGES: – – – – – – – 3 3 3
2023: Paradise Row 3 9 0 (Callum Shepherd) 4-1 W Knight drawn (7) 11 ran.

4.10 —BIOLOGYBYCLARE.COM HANDICAP (3) £25,000 added (£13,085) 1m 2f (8)

1 (1) 1/10L6- ENFJAAR 229 (H) (C) R Varian 4-9-9 J Mitchell
2 (7) L430-03 STAY WELL 14 (D) H Morrison 6-9-5 F Marsh
3 (3) 41/1-8 TARJEEH 26 Owen Burrows 4-9-4 D Muscutt
4 (8) 214051 WADACRE GOMEZ 14 (C&D4D) C Johnston 4-9-4 J Hart
5 (5) 232/84-5 DIAMOND RANGER 14 J Osborne 5-9-2 W Carver (3)
6 (2) 1-L0LLL ZEALOT 14 (P) (C&D2D2) M Appleby 6-8-13 A Rawlinson
7 (4) 44251- SNIPER'S EYE 266 (H) D M Simcock 4-8-11 J Haynes
8 (6) 111-2LL ROXANNE 17 (H) E Dunlop 4-8-7 R Dawson

Probable SP: 3 Wadacre Gomez, 10-3 Sniper's Eye, 5 Tarjeeh, Enfjaar, 13-2 Stay Well, 10 Diamond Ranger, 12 Zealot, 16 Roxanne.
FAVOURITES & 2023: No corresponding race.

4.50 —VILLA COLLET HANDICAP (5) £12,000 added (£6,281) 1m 2f (10)

1 (7) 415-635 MILDYJAMA 28 (B) (D) P Chamings 4-9-10 T Jakes (5)
2 (6) 4-34L MOAB 12 Miss H Knight 4-9-10 S W Kelly
3 (3) 77-1571 MARION'S BOY 19 (V) (C&D5D5) R Teal 7-9-9 F Marsh
4 (4) 45486-6 BRASSAVOLA 19 (B) (BF) K P De Foy 5-9-7 D Muscutt
5 (10) 642231- EARLY MORNING DEW 434 (C&D) J & S Best 8-9-7 Jimmy Quinn
6 (5) 144130/ RIVER ALWEN 1097 (B) (D) Craig Benton 6-9-7 J Hart
7 (2) 8-1L325 RASCALLION 61 Mrs S Leech 5-9-7 Mia Nicholls (5)
8 (1) 61-3653 SHAHEEN SAQAAR 19 E Dunlop 4-9-4 J Mitchell
9 (8) 836-245 JENSON BENSON 126 (C&DC3) S Lycett 6-9-4 J Hart
10 (9) 3-08422 NIGHT BREEZE 8 (BF) I Williams 4-9-0 H Burns (3)
11 (6) 654131 CHOURMO 13 (H) (D2) M Gillard 4-8-10 J F Egan

Probable SP: 9-2 Early Morning Dew, 11-2 Chourmo, Brassavola, 13-2 Shaheen Saqaar, 7 Night Breeze, 12 Jenson Benson, 16 River Alwen, Mildyjama, 20 Moab.
FAVOURITES & 2023: No corresponding race.

5.20 —HALLGARTEN & NOVUM WINES HANDICAP (4) £12,000 added (£6,281) 1m (13)

1 (10) 311334 BILLY MILL 39 (D) B Millman 6-9-10 F Marsh
2 (9) 1P-8L7L ASSESSMENT 12 (H) (D2) A Watson 5-9-9 Laura Coughlan (3)
3 (12) 84-3121 NOODLE MISSION 32 E Smyth-Osbourne 4-9-9 D Muscutt
4 (3) 1620-89 RESTRICT 139 D M Simcock 4-9-8 J Haynes
5 (6) 32-L890 BASS PLAYER 34 (T) K Frost 5-9-8 A Pinna (7)
6 (13) 1117-L0 RUNNING STAR 27 (P) (BF) H Palmer 4-9-6 Mia Nicholls (5)
7 (1) 322-3 RUNNING STAR 27 (P) (BF) H Palmer 4-9-6 J Hart
8 (4) 4L7-L74 ROYAL PARADE 13 G Kelleway 5-9-5 J Peate (3)
9 (8) 71630-7 VALKYRIAN 17 (D2) J Osborne 4-9-5 W Carver (3)
10 (7) 0126L-1 HEY LYLA 14 (C&D) C Johnston 4-9-5 J Mitchell
11 (2) 177233 BOASTY 28 (V) (C3D) I Furtado 7-9-2 K O'Neill
12 (5) 033516 STORA BELLA 16 J Butler 6-8-12 R Dawson
13 (11) 05111/P BOLD SUITOR 19 (BT) (C&D) Craig Benton 7-8-10 Rhiain Ingram (3)

Probable SP: 3 Noodle Mission, 9-2 Hey Lyla, 5 Running Star, 13-2 Valkyrian, 7 Boasty, 10 Billy Mill, 12 Restrict, 16 Bora Bora, 20 Assessment, Royal Parade.
FAVOURITES & 2023: No corresponding race.

TRACK FACTS: L-H Polytrack course. **GOING:** Standard. **STALLS:** 6f centre; remainder inside. **Top jockey:** Jack Mitchell. **Top trainer:** M Appleby. **Headgear first time:** 4.10 Roxanne, Sniper's Eye, 4.50 Mildyjama, River Alwen. **Longest traveller:** Billy Mill (5.20) 241 miles. **Drop in Class:** 2.15 Beauhaather is down 3 grades on last run (Class 2 to Class 5); Lift Lady (3); 2.50 Rocking Ends (2); Lord Riddiford (2); 3.30 Loves Loving (3); Springbecamesummer (3); 4.50 River Alwen (3).

DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low in sprints. **First run since wind surgery:** None today.

RIPON SSR

ROBIN GOODFELLOW		GIMCRACK	
1.35	Clifftop Heaven	1.35	Stellarmasterpiece
2.05	Line Of Force	2.05	Lovely Spirit
2.40	Run This Way	2.40	Run This Way
3.20	Garden Oasis	3.20	Garden Oasis
3.55	Dakota Gold	3.55	Dakota Gold
4.35	Greenlightforgo	4.35	My Noble Lord
5.10	Crown's Lady	5.10	Mambha

1.35 —RIPON RACES LADIES DERBY HANDICAP (FEMALE AMATEUR JOCKEYS) (6) £7,000 added (£3,477) 1m 4f 10yds (10)

1 (3) 63571-6 SAMEEM 24 (P) (C&DC) (GS) T Easterby 8-10-9 Mrs Emily Roberts
2 (5) 0041/13 CLIFFTOP HEAVEN 13 (P) (D) (G) A Watson 7-10-8 Miss B Hampson
3 (7) 4143-31 STELLARMASTERPIECE 38 (D) (S) M Hammond 4-10-6 Miss Becky Smith
4 (8) 655-L45 VALLAMOREY 55 (T) (S) S England 6-10-6 Miss Amy Collier
5 (10) 90-3784 PERIPETEIA 20 (CD) (G) P Kirby 6-10-3 Miss J Bedi
6 (6) 412865 HEATHERDOWN HERO 22 (H) R Menzies 5-10-2 Miss Alex Garven
7 (9) 872762 CAN CAN GIRL 22 (D3) Craig Lidster 6-10-0 Miss A Keighley
8 (1) L49/314- POINT OF HONOUR J222 (DBF) (S) D Brooke 9-9-13 Miss P Brown
9 (4) 7323-58 RAYENA 2 (T) R Fahey 4-9-9 Miss L Teal
10 (2) 07/8L-LL FAST DEAL J13 M Chapman 7-9-9 Miss S Bowen

Probable SP: 4 Stellarmasterpiece, 9-2 Can Can Girl, Clifftop Heaven, 5 Sameem, 8 Point Of Honour, 10 Rayena, Peripeteia, 12 Heatherdown Hero.
FAVOURITES: – – – – – – – – 1 3 (W 10-7). AGES: – – – – – – – – 4 7
2023: Sameem 7 10 9 (Mrs E Roberts) 9-2 T Easterby drawn (8) 9 ran.

2.05 —HARROGATE TOWN AFC BEST DRESSED GENTLEMAN EBF RESTRICTED NOVICE STAKES (5) (2-Y-O) £9,000 added (£4,860) 6f (11)

1 (5) 4 AN REALTA CARRAIG 9 A Keatley 9-7 O McSweeney (3)
2 (6) 6 GLITTER CODE 9 W Knight 9-7 Brandon Wilkie (5)
3 (9) LINE OF FORCE K R Burke 9-7 S Gray
4 (4) 7 STAPLEFORD PARK 26 C Fellowes 9-7 K Stott
5 (1) CAPLA DAVIEKINS M & D Easterby 9-5 Joanna Mason
6 (3) ITSALLABOUTUS R Fahey 9-5 D Nolan
7 (7) 3 LOVELY SPIRIT 23 (BF) R Fahey 9-2 Ryan Sexton
8 (2) SHANTI SHANTI J & S Quinn 9-2 JP Sullivan
9 (6) 7 SHIELAS WELL 6 G Tuer 9-2 T Eaves
10 (11) 42315 UNTHINKABLE 2 (S) P Kirby 9-2 C Beasley
11 (10) 4 TOOTA 21 T Easterby 9-0 D Allan

Probable SP: 5-2 Line Of Force, 7-2 Lovely Spirit, 4 Unthinkable, 7 An Realta Carraig, 10 Stapleford Park, 12 Shanti Shanti, 14 Glitter Code, 16 Itsallaboutus, 20 Toota.
FAVOURITES: – – 2 0 2 2 – 1 0 1
2023: Barg 2 9 4 (Sam James) Evens Fav K R Burke drawn (9) 13 ran.

2.40 —GRANTLEY HALL HANDICAP (6) £7,000 added (£3,664) 6f (11)

1 (7) 413433 BURJ MALINKA 14 (D2BF) (S) Adrian Nicholls 6-9-10 P Mathers
2 (3) 58-9711 RUN THIS WAY 21 (V) (C&D3D) (S) P Midgley 6-9-10 D Nolan
3 (1) 533L55 IMPRESSOR 14 (P) (D4) (S) Phillip Makin 7-9-10 R Scott
4 (9) 718-214 WHITE UMBRELLA 28 (D3) (S) C Kellett 5-9-9 C Beasley
5 (2) 9-61552 CANARIA QUEEN 9 (D) (S) T Easterby 4-9-8 D Allan
6 (4) 471804 NIGHTS OVER EGYPT 16 (V) (D) (S) R Menzies 4-9-7 Joanna Mason
7 (10) L85-8L8 GREATEST TIME 16 P Evans 4-9-6 P Dennis
8 (6) 74-8249 REDROSEZORRO 20 (P) (D6) (S) C Kellett 10-9-2 Brandon Wilkie (5)
9 (8) 502-972 HURSTWOOD 21 (C&D3D4) (GS) P Niven 7-9-0 Mark Winn (3)
10 (5) 146-442 OPAL STORM 13 (T) (G) B Rothwell 4-8-12 JP Sullivan
11 (11) 42575-3 FLAVIUS TITUS 48 (P) (C&D3) (G) D Brooke 9-8-8 K S McHugh (7)

Probable SP: 5-2 Run This Way, 4 Burj Malinka, Canaria Queen, 8 White Umbrella, 10 Opal Storm, Hurstwood, 14 Flavius Titus, Impressor, 16 Nights Over Egypt.
FAVOURITES: – – – – – 1 – 0 0 1 (W 9-0). AGES: – – – – – 5 – 4 6 7
2023: Indian Sounds 7 9 7 (Graham Lee) 5-2 Fav P Midgley drawn (4) 9 ran.

3.20 —KIRBY THOMAS GRAND FINALE CLASSIC HANDICAP (5) £9,000 added (£4,711) 1m 1f 170yds (7)

1 (5) 119007/ FOUNTAIN CROSS 611 T Easterby 6-10-4 S B Kirrane
2 (3) 360-213 EY UP ITS THE BOSS 21 (C&D) (G) Tony Coyle & Kaine Wood 5-10-4 D Nolan
3 (7) 488872 HORTZADAR 14 (C3) (GS) D O'Meara 9-10-1 Mark Winn (3)
4 (2) 757-431 GARDEN OASIS 15 (B) (C5D) (G) T Easterby 9-9-11 D Allan
5 (6) 3L716-0 VERY EXCELLENT 17 (D) (S) M Sowersby 8-9-10 JP Sullivan
6 (1) 25-958 LOVE WARRIOR 27 C Johnston 3-8-12 F Norton
7 (4) 927-392 UP THE JAZZ 14 R Fahey 3-8-12 C Murtagh

Probable SP: 9-4 Ey Up Its The Boss, 3 Garden Oasis, 7-2 Hortzadar, 4 Up The Jazz, 12 Love Warrior, 16 Fountain Cross.
FAVOURITES: – – – – – – – – – 0 (W 9-4). AGES: – – – – – – – – – 3
2023: Bluefiaflyinghigh 3 9 4 (Jack Garritty) 6-1 M Bell drawn (10) 11 ran.

3.55 —RIPON RACES LADIES DAY HANDICAP (2) £25,000 added (£12,885) 6f (7)

1 (3) 850-262 MR WAGYU 19 (V) (C&D2D13) (GS) J & S Quinn 9-9-9 JP Sullivan
2 (6) 663697 ABERAMA GOLD 18 (V) (D10) (GS) D O'Meara 7-9-7 D Nolan
3 (2) 333-803 MARINE WAVE 18 (T) R Fahey 4-9-7 Brandon Wilkie (5)
4 (5) 0L-0821 DAKOTA GOLD 24 (C&DD8) (GS) M Dods 10-9-6 C Beasley
5 (7) 010-855 TWELFTH KNIGHT 15 (C&D2D3) (GS) P Midgley 5-9-1 Ryan Sexton
6 (4) 4-26061 MANILA SCOUSE 14 (T) (D) (S) T Easterby 5-9-0 D Fentiman
7 (1) 000-4L6 BAY BREEZE 15 (C&D4D) (S) T Easterby 5-8-8 Amie Waugh (5)

Probable SP: 7-4 Mr Wagyu, 4 Dakota Gold, 5 Manila Scouse, 6 Marine Wave, 13-2 Aberama Gold, 12 Twelfth Knight, 14 Bay Breeze.
FAVOURITES: – – – – – – – – – 3 0 (W 9-5). AGES: – – – – – – – – – 8 9
2023: Justanotherbottle 9 9 0 (Sam James) 9-1 K Ryan drawn (1) 6 ran.

4.35 —MASONS "WHO DARES, GINS" HANDICAP (5) (3-Y-O) £7,000 added (£3,664) 1m 4f 10yds (6)

1 (6) 415-26 FREDS MATE 31 C Johnston 9-11 F Norton
2 (4) 54-0261 FILIBUSTERING 23 (S) T Easterby 9-11 D Allan
3 (2) 535-451 CONTINUANCE 20 (H) (S) M Keighley 9-9 Mark Winn (3)
4 (2) 78-54 CARNIVAL DAY 10 D M Simcock 9-7 T Eaves
5 (3) 80L-141 MY NOBLE LORD 24 (D) (S) M Bell 9-7 K Stott
6 (1) 947 GREENLIGHTFORGO 23 T Easterby 9-4 D Fentiman

Probable SP: 6-4 My Noble Lord, 7-4 Filibustering, 9-2 Continuance, 14 Carnival Day, 16 Greenlightforgo, Freds Mate.
FAVOURITES & 2023: No corresponding race.

5.10 —YOUR HARROGATE RADIO ON-AIR AND ONLINE HANDICAP (6) (3-Y-O) £7,000 added (£3,664) 1m (10)

1 (1) 97L132 EVELYN'S PHOENIX 12 (BF) (G) T Easterby 9-11 D Allan
2 (3) 68522 MAMBHA 21 M Dods 9-10 C Beasley
3 (2) 58331 LOOSE TONGUE 20 (H) (D) (S) P Evans 9-10 P Dennis
4 (6) 1617-57 SEAHORSE SYD 16 (D) O Pears 9-9 H Russell
5 (5) 466 CROWN'S LADY 20 Craig Lidster 9-9 W Pyle (5)
6 (4) 552842 EMU WAR 2 (V) K R Burke 9-8 Brandon Wilkie (5)
7 (4) 090-5 PAPAGREY 15 T Easterby 9-6 S B Kirrane
8 (8) 81-1354 ASPIRE TO GLORY 23 (HT) Alice Haynes 9-3 D Keenan
9 (10) 250-0L4 WHATWOULDIKNOW 12 N Tinkler 9-2 F McManoman
10 (7) 225656 LIKLEMAN 17 S G West 9-0 JP Sullivan

Probable SP: 3 Evelyn's Phoenix, 4 Mambha, Loose Tongue, 7 Aspire To Glory, 8 Crown's Lady, 10 Whatwouldiknow, Emu War, 20 Likleman, Seahorse Syd, Papagrey.
FAVOURITES: – – – – – – – – – 1 1 (W 9-7).
2023: Asgard's Captain 3 9 0 (Ben Curtis) 17-2 Thomas Dowling drawn (2) dead heated with Barrolo 3 9 9 (Sam James) 11-8 Fav (G Tuer) drawn (5) 6 ran.

TRACK FACTS: R-H course. **GOING:** Soft-good to soft in places. **STALLS:** 6f stands side; round inside; 1m4f centre. **DRAW ADVANTAGE:** Low up to 1m. **Top jockey:** David Allan. **Top trainer:** T Easterby. **Placed in the race last year:** 1.35 Sameem (1st); Point Of Honour (3rd); 2.40 Hurstwood (3rd). **Headgear first time:** 1.35 Vallamorey. **Longest travellers:** Greatest Time (2.40) & Loose Tongue (5.10) 214 miles. **Drop in Class:** 2.05 Stapleford Park is down 3 grades on last run (Class 2 to Class 5); 3.20 Ey Up Its The Boss (2). **First run since wind surgery:** 1.35 Point Of Honour.

LINGFIELD SSR

ROBIN GOODFELLOW		GIMCRACK	
6.25	Bakersboy	6.25	Chico Dulce
7.00	Beat The Clock	7.00	Worrals
7.30	Spirit Of Leros	7.30	Pit Boss
8.00	Essme	8.00	Gilt Edge
8.30	Secret Bid	8.30	Marlay Park
9.00	Spring Is Sprung	9.00	Spring Is Sprung

6.25 —AMATEUR JOCKEYS' HANDICAP (AWT) (6) £5,700 added (£2,831) 1m 2f (11)

1 (8) 2-9L FEN TIGER 51 J Feilden 6-11-2 R Birkett
2 (7) L44 BAKERSBOY 7 (P) (C&D) Alice Haynes 6-11-1 S Walker
3 (11) 1L9 WARRIOR SQUARE 28 (V) T Kent 5-10-13 L Kent (5)
4 (5) 408 CHICO DULCE 23 M Madgwick 4-10-12 F Yarham (3)
5 (4) 812 STORMINGIN 63 (B) (D3) G & J Moore 11-10-11 Jude Fernandes (7)
6 (10) 810 FOREVER PROUD 19 (C&D2) M Hoad 4-10-10 Patrick Millman
7 (3) 12-7 MAGICAL DRAGON 49 (V) (C&D) P Chamings 7-10-9 F Tett
8 (2) 0L-L MI SUENO 42 P Butler 5-10-8 Miss M Trainor (5)
9 (1) 000 INCLEMENT WEATHER 38 (T) A Hales 6-10-7 Miss Poppy Scott (5)
10 (4) 585 DILLYDINGDILLYDONG 16 James Owen 6-10-7 E Cagney
11 (9) 6L-L POPPYEQUIANO 17 (H) P Butler 5-10-7 Miss Michelle Bryant (5)

Probable SP: 9-4 Bakersboy, 3 Stormingin, 11-2 Magical Dragon, 13-2 Dillydingdillydong, 12 Forever Proud, Fen Tiger, Chico Dulce, Warrior Square.

7.00 —HANDICAP (AWT) (5) (3-Y-O) £7,100 added (£3,716) 1m 2f (8)

1 (7) 294 ALPEN POWER 14 C Johnston 9-11 Archie Young (7)
2 (3) 2LL ENDOSSER 23 M Botti 9-10 M Ghiani
3 (6) 313 WORRALS 30 R Beckett 9-7 Josephine Gordon
4 (5) 4-42 MIDNIGHT RUMBLE 26 (BF) A King 9-6 P-L Jamin
5 (8) 3L1 ROYAL PRAISE 14 (D) E Dunlop 9-4 P Cosgrave
6 (1) 05-3 BEAT THE CLOCK 159 D M Simcock 9-3 Georgia Dobie (3)
7 (4) 2-8L MOHAVE DANCER 41 (P) C Fellowes 9-2 G Wood
8 (2) 772 SQUEAKER 81 C Hobson 9-0 L Catton (5)

Probable SP: 10-3 Midnight Rumble, 4 Beat The Clock, 5 Worrals, Royal Praise, 6 Alpen Power, 7 Squeaker, 10 Endosser, 20 Mohave Dancer.

7.30 —NOVICE STAKES (5) (2-Y-O) £6,300 added (£3,402) 6f (11)

1 (2) L BADECO 22 P McEntee 9-7 Josephine Gordon
2 (10) 0 BENTLEY AIR 36 R Hannon 9-7 S Hitchcott
3 (11) 9 KON'NICHIWA 9 B Meehan 9-7 Olivia Tubb (7)
4 (4) 45 PIT BOSS 9 G Boughey 9-7 P-L Jamin
5 (4) ROGUE BULLET Jack Jones 9-7 Jack Doughty (5)
6 (8) SEAGOLAZO H Palmer 9-7 C Hutchinson (3)
7 (7) SOLAR ARMY R Teal 9-7 G Downing
8 (5) 5 SPIRIT OF LEROS 40 M Botti 9-7 M Ghiani
9 (6) L5 TOLERANCE 16 G Boughey 9-7 P Cosgrave
10 (1) L DINKY DIVA 14 P McEntee 9-2 C Planas (3)
11 (9) 06 LEYHAIMUR 10 D M Simcock 9-2 Georgia Dobie (3)

Probable SP: 5-2 Spirit Of Leros, 11-4 Pit Boss, 9-2 Seagolazo, 7 Rogue Bullet, 10 Tolerance, 12 Leyhaimur, 16 Solar Army, Bentley Air, 20 Kon'nichiwa.

8.00 —CLASSIFIED STAKES (6) £5,700 added (£2,983) 7f (11)

1 (5) 851 PORFIN 7 (P) (D) (GS) P McEntee 6-10-0 C Planas (3)
2 (3) 065 ALYARA 12 (P) (BF) J & R Flint 6-9-9 Taylor Fisher (3)
3 (7) 443 ESSME 12 (PT) (C&D) R Cook & J Bridger 6-9-9 W Carson
4 (2) 79-3 GILT EDGE 17 (P) (C) (G) C Mason 8-9-9 Gina Mangan (3)
5 (8) 908 MOORGATE 35 P G Murphy 5-9-9 C Hutchinson (3)
6 (9) 703 RIVER WHARFE 13 (P) (D3) (G) A Carroll 6-9-9 Jack Doughty (5)
7 (6) 6-97 RUN CMC 12 (V) P Chamings 4-9-9 J Bryan
8 (4) 140 SCRAMBLE 51 (B) C Allen 4-9-9 P-L Jamin
9 (10) 967 TOP BUTTON 16 (HT) S C Williams 6-9-9 M Ghiani
10 (11) 4-9L TWILIGHT KISS 19 M Hoad 4-9-9 S Hitchcott
11 (1) 80L YOU ARE MY WORLD 71 (V) A Carroll 5-9-9 Molly Gunn (7)

Probable SP: 11-4 Porfin, 4 Essme, 9-2 Gilt Edge, 7 Alyara, 8 Scramble, River Wharfe, 10 Top Button, 14 Run Cmc.

8.30 —HANDICAP (4) £9,500 added (£4,972) 7f 217yds (9)

1 (8) 503 LOVE DE VEGA 19 (D4) (GS) C Johnston 5-10-2 Archie Young (7)
2 (5) 4-04 MARLAY PARK 20 (D4) (G) J Boyle 6-9-13 P Cosgrave
3 (6) L37 HODLER 20 (D4) (S) J Boyle 5-9-12 L Catton (5)
4 (2) 541 YANTARNI 19 (P) (C&D) (S) I Williams 5-9-9 Josephine Gordon
5 (4) L15 SECRET BID 20 (P) (C&DD) A Watson 5-9-7 J Bryan
6 (7) 41-0 PILOTO PARDO 20 (D) R Hannon 3-9-5 S Hitchcott
7 (9) 033 SIR OLIVER 19 (P) (D6) (G) C Dwyer 7-9-4 M Ghiani
8 (3) 44-6 FALCON NINE 23 C Fellowes 4-9-3 G Wood
9 (1) 188 SO QUIET 26 (D) Harry Charlton 3-9-1 P-L Jamin

Probable SP: 10-3 Yantarni, 7-2 So Quiet, 5 Marlay Park, Love De Vega, 7 Sir Oliver, 10 Secret Bid, 14 Hodler, 16 Piloto Pardo, Falcon Nine.

9.00 —HANDICAP (5) £7,100 added (£3,716) 4f 217yds (6)

1 (1) 741 SPRING IS SPRUNG 10 (D2) (G) P Midgley 5-9-9 Archie Young (7)
2 (5) 467- JUST GLAMOROUS 248 (D10) (GS) C Mason 11-9-6 Gina Mangan (3)
3 (2) 955 PARISIAC 13 (P) (CD) (GS) Alice Haynes 5-9-7 Anna Gibson (7)
4 (6) 392 SAFARI DREAM 10 (P) (D3BF) (G) B Millman 4-9-7 G Downing
5 (3) 235 DARLO PRIDE 54 (TV) (D3) A Carson 4-9-5 M Ghiani
6 (4) 959 AGOSTINO 10 R Cowell 4-9-3 M Ghiani

Probable SP: 7-4 Spring Is Sprung, 9-4 Safari Dream, 9-2 Parisiac, 8 Just Glamorous, 10 Darlo Pride, 14 Agostino.

TRACK FACTS: L-H Polytrack course. **GOING:** Aw: standard; turf: good-good to soft in places. **STALLS:** 1m2f inside; remainder centre. **DRAW ADVANTAGE:** Low. **Top jockey:** William Carson. **Top trainer:** A Watson. **Headgear first time:** 7.00 Mohave Dancer, 8.00 You Are My World, 8.30 Secret Bid. **Longest travellers:** Alpen Power (7.00) & Love De Vega (8.30) 270 miles.

Drop in Class: 7.30 Bentley Air is down 3 grades on last run (Class 2 to Class 5); Spirit Of Leros (2); 8.30 Marlay Park (2); Hodler (2); So Quiet (2). **First run since wind surgery:** None today.

WOLVERHAMPTON SSR

ROBIN GOODFELLOW		GIMCRACK	
5.28	Divine Presence	5.28	Pique'
6.00	Cavallo Bay	6.00	Cavallo Bay
6.35	Gaiety Musical	6.35	Synthesize
7.10	Flying Panther	7.10	Flying Panther
7.40	Night Lark	7.40	Night Lark
8.10	Baroque Buoy	8.10	Baroque Buoy
8.40	Lady Nagin	8.40	Ustath

5.28 —FILLIES' HANDICAP (5) (3-Y-O) £7,100 added (£3,716) 1m 4f 51yds (5)

1 (1) 21L LOVE YOU DARLING 11 B Brookhouse 9-10 S D Bowen (5)
2 (4) 4-42 DIVINE PRESENCE 27 J & T Gosden 9-9 T Heard (3)
3 (3) 551 PIQUE' 24 (H) (D) J Fanshawe 9-7 R Coakley
4 (5) 55-L ALMUDENA 13 (P) (BF) Sir M Prescott 9-4 L Morris
5 (2) 51- TIPTOE 238 (C) D M Simcock 9-3 C Fallon

Probable SP: 5-2 Divine Presence, 3 Pique', Love You Darling, 5 Almudena, 11-2 Tiptoe.

6.00 —NOVICE STAKES (5) (2-Y-O) £6,300 added (£3,402) 7f 36yds (7)

1 (2) 54 BRINDAVAN 22 S Woods 9-7 Dylan Hogan
2 (1) 5 CAVALLO BAY 22 (P) (BF) C Appleby 9-7 D Costello
3 (3) CORPUS JURIS C Johnston 9-7 A Mullen
4 (6) L7 LAZIEELUNCH 24 S Woods 9-7 S D Bowen (5)
5 (5) MOOEEAZ S & E Crisford 9-7 R Coakley
6 (7) L8 PATROL 14 W Haggas 9-7 C Fallon
7 (4) 3 STUDIOUS 49 M Loughnane 9-7 L Morris

Probable SP: 5-2 Cavallo Bay, 3 Brindavan, 10-3 Mooeeaz, 11-2 Corpus Juris, 6 Patrol, 16 Studious.

6.35 —RESTRICTED MAIDEN STAKES (5) £7,300 added (£3,942) 7f 36yds (12)

1 (5) 324 THANKS DAD 30 S Dixon 4-10-0 T Heard (3)
2 (12) 234- KITTEN GLOVES 331 (PT) (BF2) I Mohammed 4-9-9 R Kavanagh (7)
3 (9) 7L BARITUS BELLATOR 12 (T) D Cunha 3-9-7 R Clutterbuck
4 (7) 833 HIGHLAND OLLY 12 G Tuer 3-9-7 A Farragher
5 (4) PASEA GRANDE (T) H Kobeissi 3-9-7 L Morris
6 (8) SUSTAINED D & C Kubler 3-9-7 Dylan Hogan
7 (1) HUNTERS RUN R Hughes 3-9-5 Ethan Jones (7)
8 (10) MAKEMINEAGUINNESS W G M Turner 3-9-5 L Kenny
9 (3) L-35 RESPECTABLE JACK 29 M Crawley 3-9-5 C Fallon
10 (2) EXPERT ELSA D & C Kubler 3-9-0 R Coakley
11 (11) 2 GAIETY MUSICAL 16 P Evans 3-9-0 S D Bowen (5)
12 (6) 3 SYNTHESIZE 46 H Candy 3-9-0 T Whelan

Probable SP: 7-2 Kitten Gloves, 4 Synthesize, 9-2 Gaiety Musical, 6 Thanks Dad, 10 Respectable Jack, Hunters Run, 12 Highland Olly, Pasea Grande, 14 Sustained, 16 Expert Elsa.

7.10 —CLASSIFIED STAKES (6) £5,700 added (£3,078) 1m 1f 104yds (11)

1 (2) 226 EVA ROSIE 19 (B) Mrs Stella Barclay 4-9-11 A Jary (5)
2 (5) 943 FLYING PANTHER 38 (HPT) James Owen 4-9-11 S D Bowen (5)
3 (10) 554- IMPRINT 324 M Pimell 5-9-11 R Clutterbuck
4 (8) L37 INEXPLICABLE 38 (TV) (C&D7C) A Brittain 7-9-11 C Hardie
5 (7) 47-6 TRACKMAN 24 S Pearce 4-9-11 T Heard (3)
6 (1) LL0 DISQUIETUDE 15 J Butler 3-9-0 A Mullen
7 (4) 5LL JAUNTY DANCER 51 (V) C Dunnett 3-9-0 C Howarth (3)
8 (9) 220 LIGHTNING BAY 51 (PT) J Butler 3-9-0 A Farragher
9 (3) 6L7 RASMAH 16 (B) A Watson 3-9-0 L Morris
10 (11) 8L5 SUBALTERN 16 (PT) Miss A Murphy 3-9-0 Dylan Hogan
11 (6) 8-03 THEY 21 (P) G Boughey 3-9-0 Grace McEntee (3)

Probable SP: 4 They, 9-2 Flying Panther, 5 Eva Rosie, 13-2 Inexplicable, 8 Lightning Bay, Imprint, 10 Rasmah, 12 Trackman, 14 Subaltern, 16 Jaunty Dancer.

7.40 —HANDICAP (DIV 1) (5) (3-Y-O) £7,100 added (£3,716) 1m 142yds (9)

1 (8) 4-LL ROYAL TAPESTRY 49 (V) (BF) C Johnston 9-11 A Mullen
2 (9) 560 LUAS 34 K P De Foy 9-8 R Coakley
3 (2) 454 MUTTASIL 15 (BF) Harry Eustace 9-8 C Fallon
4 (3) 400 NIGHT LARK 15 R Beckett 9-7 R Clutterbuck
5 (4) 1-76 PALAZZO PERSICO 12 E Dunlop 9-7 L Morris
6 (6) L58 CLAXTON BAY 10 (P) R Hannon 9-5 T Greatrex
7 (5) 91-0 CADOGAN GARDENS 38 (C&D) C Hills 9-5 W Cox
8 (1) LLL RICH HARRY 4 (P) Alice Haynes 9-4 NON RUNNER)
9 (7) 286 GARDEN VIEW 14 M Usher 8-10 T Heard (3)

Probable SP: 9-4 Muttasil, 6 Royal Tapestry, Palazzo Persico, 13-2 Night Lark, 7 Luas, 8 Garden View, 10 Claxton Bay, 14 Cadogan Gardens.

8.10 —HANDICAP (DIV 2) (5) (3-Y-O) £7,100 added (£3,716) 1m 142yds (9)

1 (9) L-86 TREASURE STORM 26 D F Davis 9-10 O Lewis (7)
2 (5) 174 NIGHT OF DESIRE 14 M Botti 9-8 S D Bowen (5)
3 (2) 942 SUGARLOAF LENNY 7 W Knight 9-8 L Morris
4 (6) 9L6 BETWEEN ME AND U 27 (P) Alice Haynes 9-7 A Farragher
5 (7) L22 BAROQUE BUOY 29 G Scott 9-6 Liam Wright (5)
6 (8) 6L4 MISS IDUNN 9 R Hannon 9-5 L Kenny
7 (3) 124 THEWORLDSNOTENOUGH 20 T Ward 9-4 T Whelan
8 (1) 003 MADE ALL 41 A Brittain 9-3 C Hardie
9 (4) LL-7 SOVERAINE 14 C Johnston 8-13 A Mullen

Probable SP: 9-4 Sugarloaf Lenny, 7-2 Baroque Buoy, 6 Made All, 13-2 Between Me And U, 8 Theworldsnotenough, 10 Night Of Desire, Miss Idunn, 20 Soveraine, Treasure Storm.

8.40 —HANDICAP (6) £5,700 added (£2,983) 5f 21yds (9)

1 (1) 636 WAKAI UMI 7 (P) (C&D2) M Loughnane 4-9-10 R Coakley
2 (7) 671 LADY NAGIN 28 (D) A West 4-9-8 T Whelan
3 (4) 647 COMEDIAN LEADER 23 J & S Best 4-9-3 L Kenny
4 (3) 9-68 MORE THAN LIKELY 27 (P) Mrs N Evans 8-9-2 S D Bowen (5)
5 (2) 482 USTATH 16 (C&DD3) R Fell & S Murray 8-8-12 C Fallon
6 (6) 34L NEXT SECOND 13 (C&D3) R Carr 5-8-12 L Morris
7 (9) 797 JOSIES KID 7 (C&DD2) Alice Haynes 5-8-12 C Howarth (3)
8 (5) 326 ANOTHER ANGEL 58 (V) (CD9) A Brittain 10-8-12 C Hardie
9 (8) 458 MUTABAAHY 16 (V) (C&D7CD) A Brittain 9-8-11 A Jary (5)

Probable SP: 11-4 Lady Nagin, 10-3 Ustath, 5 Wakai Umi, 6 Josies Kid, 8 Next Second, 10 Another Angel, 12 Comedian Leader, 14 More Than Likely.

TRACK FACTS: L-H Tapeta course. **GOING:** Standard. **STALLS:** 7f outside; remainder inside. **DRAW ADVANTAGE:** None. **Top jockey:** Luke Morris. **Top trainer:** M Loughnane. **Placed in the race last year:** 8.40 Josies Kid (1st).

Headgear first time: 5.28 Almudena, 6.00 Cavallo Bay, 6.35 Pasea Grande, 7.10 Rasmah, 7.40 Royal Tapestry. **Longest travellers:** Jaunty Dancer (7.10) & Comedian Leader (8.40) 173 miles. **Drop in Class:** 6.00 Patrol is down 2 grades on last run (Class 3 to Class 5); 7.10 Disquietude (2). **First run since wind surgery:** None today.

HOTSPOTS

WORK WHISPER
CRACKING GOLD
(Royal Ascot, 5.05)

WEIGHTING GAME
PARISIAC
(Lingfield, 9.00)
Down 15lb from last winning mark.

BURNT FINGERS
MADE ALL
(Wolverhampton, 8.10)

CAPTAIN HEATH TRIO
DIAMOND RAIN (nap)
(Royal Ascot, 3.45)
KYPRIOS (nb)
(Royal Ascot, 4.25)
MOSTABSHIR
(Royal Ascot, 6.15)

DAVID HOWDEN achieved a life's ambition when Running Lion, the filly he owns and is trained by John and Thady Gosden, won the Duke Of Cambridge Stakes under a brilliant ride from Oisin Murphy. Howden is the owner of a hugely successful insurance company and has a big passion for racing. His exuberant celebrations in the winner's enclosure, after Running Lion held off the challenge from stablemate Laurel, characterised everything the sport is about. 'I'm so very, very happy,' Howden gasped. 'I love the game, you have to love the game to be in it. 'There is a lot of satisfaction in that and I cannot believe we have done it. What a great day this is!'

DOMINIC KING
Racing Correspondent at Royal Ascot

Leovanni strikes for Qatar to start repaying £25m splurge

A BURST of electricity, a shock-wave through an industry. The Queen Mary doesn't command star billing at Royal Ascot but the significance of this latest running cannot be understated.

Leovanni, with a push-button change of speed, scampered away with the Group Two contest over five furlongs and, in doing so, gave owners Wathnan Racing their first victory of this year's meeting. It is unlikely to be their last. If it is, there will be some long faces.

Wathnan Racing is the venture of the Emir of Qatar and in recent weeks he has sanctioned a spending spree of more than £25million on horses capable of winning here, such as Haatem, who runs in Saturday's Jersey Stakes. Leovanni, at £190,000, was relatively cheap but crucial to the mission.

Trained by Karl Burke and ridden by James Doyle, Leovanni was exhilarating and his display means these peacock-blue and old gold silks are here to shake up the established order.

It is 12 months since Wathnan dipped their toe, spectacularly, into racing. On the eve of Royal Ascot 2023, they bought Gregory and Courage Mon Ami, who won the Queen's Vase and Gold Cup respectively. What has happened since then shows that was no flash in the pan.

'No amount of investment guarantees success in any sport, particularly ours,' said Richard Brown, racing adviser to Wathnan, and he is right. The opening day saw their horses place second and third in two races, the Coventry Stakes and the Wolferton Stakes.

'But, yes, it's a really important moment. For any new player to come into our game is tremendous. The scale of the ambition they have shown so far is great.

'I don't know what is going to happen in the future but it's an extraordinary opportunity to build this team of horses.'

Watching Gregory, trained by John and Thady Gosden, attempt to win them a second Gold Cup this afternoon — he steps into the fray as Courage Mon Ami is injured — will be fascinating but to triumph he must find a way past hot favourite Kyprios.

Aidan O'Brien's horses have burst into form spectacularly, the trainer doubling up thanks to Illinois, in the Queen's Vase, and the outstanding Auguste Rodin, who thundered home in the Prince of Wales's Stakes to add lustre to an astonishing c.v.

Incredibly, this was the 400th Group One win of the master trainer's career, a record that is almost incomprehensible and a number that shows just how far Wathnan have to go to scale the biggest heights. O'Brien, simply, is a genius.

'This is a very special horse,' said O'Brien of Auguste Rodin, who justified 13-8 favouritism under Ryan Moore.

'He has a personality and to become good, horses need personality. He has everything. The action, the temperament and the pedigree. I'm so grateful for everyone making this happen.'

2.30 —NORFOLK STAKES (GROUP 2) (1) (2-Y-O) £150,000 added (£85,065) 5f (14) ITV4

No.	Draw	Form	Horse / Trainer / Weight	Jockey
101	(13)	1	**AESTERIUS 27 (D)** A Watson 9-3	W Buick
102	(14)	121	**ARIZONA BLAZE 26 (D) (S)** A Murray (IRE) 9-3	David Egan
103	(3)	1	**BINADHAM 58 (D) (G)** K P De Foy 9-3	B Sayette
104	(9)	51	**BLINKY 23 (D) (S)** E Walker 9-3	T Marquand
105	(1)	1	**EVENING SAIGON 23 (D) (S)** M O'Callaghan (IRE) 9-3	NON RUNNER
106	(8)	71	**LOOM 15 (D)** R Fahey 9-3	B Garritty
107	(12)	1	**MILFORD 22 (D) (S)** K R Burke 9-3	C Lee
108	(10)	12	**MOVING FORCE 12 (D) (G)** R Fahey 9-3	Oisin Orr
109	(5)	122	**ROCK HUNTER 28 (P) (D) (S)** Miss A Murphy 9-3	S De Sousa
110	(4)	1	**SHAREHOLDER 12 (D) (G)** K R Burke 9-3	James Doyle
111	(7)	1	**THE MAN 52 (D)** R Spencer 9-3	H Doyle
112	(2)	52	**TROPICAL STORM 46** A Balding 9-3	O Murphy
113	(11)	21	**WHISTLEJACKET 45 (D) (S)** A P O'Brien (IRE) 9-3	R L Moore
114	(6)	1	**SATURDAY FLIRT 55 (B) (D)** W A Ward (USA) 9-0	J Rosario

Probable SP: 11-10 Whistlejacket, 5 Shareholder, 7 Saturday Flirt, 10 Aesterius, 12 Arizona Blaze, 14 Milford, 20 Moving Force, Rock Hunter, Loom, Tropical Storm.

FAVOURITES: 3 3 0 0 3 2 3 0 0 0

2023: Valiant Force 2 9 3 (Rossa Ryan) 150-1 A Murray drawn (5) 14 ran.

TIMEFORM It's really hard to escape the claims of **WHISTLEJACKET**, who is the clear pick on form and can chart a similar path to his very smart brother Little Big Bear in tasting defeat on debut at the Curragh before getting it right on second outing and following up at this meeting. **Shareholder** runs just 12 days on from his winning start and this costly breeze-up buy is arguably open to the most improvement, with **Loom** another to consider for each-way purposes.

3.05 —KING GEORGE V STAKES (HERITAGE HANDICAP) (2) (3-Y-O) £110,000 added (£56,694) 1m 3f 211yds (19) ITV4

No.	Draw	Form	Horse / Trainer / Weight	Jockey
201	(10)	101-341	**PERSICA 19 (S)** R Hannon 9-9	S M Levey
202	(17)	412-63	**GASPER DE LEMOS 33 (BF)** A P O'Brien (IRE) 9-6	D McMonagle
203	(7)	6223-13	**CHANTILLY 33 (S)** A P O'Brien (IRE) 9-6	R L Moore
204	(18)	311-1	**GOING THE DISTANCE 71 (S)** R Beckett 9-2	Rossa Ryan
205	(3)	14-1	**NAVAL FORCE 38 (S)** Donnacha O'Brien (IRE) 9-1	G M Ryan
206	(6)	531	**GILDED WATER 20 (S)** W Haggas 9-0	T Marquand
207	(2)	52319-2	**CITY BURGLAR 40 (S)** R Beckett 9-0	S De Sousa
208	(14)	13-22	**PONIROS 33 (S)** R Beckett 9-0	David Egan
209	(13)	325-111	**FOURONEOHFEVER 26 (D2) (S)** G Boughey 8-12	Billy Loughnane
210	(5)	61-0	**KAMBOO 19** R Hughes 8-11	R Kingscote
211	(4)	41-614	**WARDA JAMILA 18 (CBF) (S)** A Balding 8-10	O Murphy
212	(12)	84-2	**FRENCH DUKE 34** R Varian 8-10	W Buick
213	(15)	72-21	**GALLANTLY 43** A P O'Brien (IRE) 8-10	W M Lordan
214	(19)	1L3	**NESKI SHERELSKI 38** J P O'Brien (IRE) 8-9	M Guyon
215	(8)	8214-46	**GO DADDY 33 (S)** W Muir & C Grassick 8-9	L Edmunds
216	(9)	52-3	**AUTUMN WINTER 74 (BF2)** A P O'Brien (IRE) 8-8	J Crowley
217	(16)	441	**HIGHLAND BLING 13 (P) (D)** J Harrington (IRE) 8-6	Miss Rachel King
218	(1)	0L-6212	**EAST INDIA DOCK 19 (D) (S)** J Fanshawe 8-6	H Doyle
219	(20)	31-43	**ASSAILANT 64 (B)** J & T Gosden 8-5	S Osborne

Probable SP: 6 Chantilly, 7 Going The Distance, Poniros, 8 Gilded Water, French Duke, 10 Persica, Fouroneohfever, Kamboo, 14 Gallantly.

FAVOURITES: 1 0 3 2 0 0 0 2 1 0 (W 8-13).

2023: Desert Hero 3 8 13 (Tom Marquand) 18-1 W Haggas drawn (21) 19 ran.

TIMEFORM **GILDED WATER** is improving in leaps and bounds, looking better the further he went when powering clear for an authoritative success at Chepstow 3 weeks ago. Representing Royal connections, who landed this prize 12 months ago, he looks sure to be suited by this longer trip and earns the vote on handicap bow. **Going The Distance** is another of firm interest, with Aidan O'Brien-trained pair **Gallantly** and **Chantilly** also respected. **French Duke** and **Poniros** complete the shortlist.

3.45 —RIBBLESDALE STAKES (FILLIES' GROUP 2) (1) (3-Y-O) £273,000 added (£154,818) 1m 3f 211yds (13) ITV4

No.	Draw	Form	Horse / Trainer / Weight	Jockey
301	(9)	3-213	**DANIELLE 40 (BF) (S)** J & T Gosden 9-2	K Shoemark
302	(2)	11	**DIAMOND RAIN 33 (C) (S)** C Appleby 9-2	W Buick
303	(4)	117	**FOREST FAIRY 20 (D)** R Beckett 9-2	Rossa Ryan
304	(8)	43-1L	**HIGHER LEAVES 40** H De Bromhead (IRE) 9-2	S Foley
305	(5)	712-33	**JE ZOUS 40 (BF2) (S)** J P O'Brien (IRE) 9-2	D McMonagle
306	(1)	1212	**KALPANA 46 (BF)** A Balding 9-2	O Murphy
307	(6)	4851-11	**LAVA STREAM 11 (H) (S)** D O'Meara 9-2	D Tudhope
308	(10)	7-12	**PORT FAIRY 43 (V)** A P O'Brien (IRE) 9-2	R L Moore
309	(7)	41	**QUEENS FORT 19 (D)** J & T Gosden 9-2	R Havlin
310	(11)	3-229	**RUBIES ARE RED 20** A P O'Brien (IRE) 9-2	W M Lordan
311	(3)	48125	**SHEEMA'S ROSE 18 (S)** Mme A Karkosa (FR) 9-2	T Marquand
312	(13)	13	**SIYOLA 33 (S)** J & T Gosden 9-2	James Doyle
313	(12)	15-14	**YOU GOT TO ME 20 (D)** R Beckett 9-2	H Crouch

Probable SP: 7-4 Diamond Rain, 7 Kalpana, 15-2 You Got To Me, 8 Danielle, Port Fairy, 10 Forest Fairy, 12 Rubies Are Red, 14 Siyola, 20 Queens Fort, Lava Stream.

FAVOURITES: 0 2 1 0 3 2 1 0 2 3

2023: Warm Heart 3 9 2 (Ryan Moore) 13-2 A P O'Brien drawn (16) 17 ran.

TIMEFORM The regally-bred **DIAMOND RAIN** looked a smart prospect when following up her debut win in a Newbury listed event last month and, with scope for plenty more progress over this still longer trip, she's a really appealing candidate. **Kalpana** has progressed significantly with each run and heads up the opposition, along with **You Got To Me**, who stuck to her task in admirable fashion when fourth in the Oaks at Epsom.

ROYAL ASCOT — ITV ITV4 ALL ON ITV

ROBIN GOODFELLOW		GIMCRACK	
2.30	Whistlejacket	2.30	Whistlejacket (nb)
3.05	Gallantly	3.05	French Duke
3.45	Forest Fairy	3.45	DIAMOND RAIN (nap)
4.25	Kyprios (nb)	4.25	Kyprios
5.05	STARLORE (nap)	5.05	Mickley
5.40	King's Gambit	5.40	Bracken's Laugh
6.15	Fresh	6.15	English Oak

NEWMARKET – 3.45 Diamond Rain (nb); 6.15 FRESH (nap).
NORTHERNER – 2.30 LOOM (nap); 5.05 Native Warrior (nb).

4.25 —GOLD CUP (GROUP 1) (BRITISH CHAMPIONS SERIES) (1) £650,000 added (£368,615) 2m 3f 210yds (10) ITV

No.	Draw	Form	Horse / Trainer / Weight	Jockey
401	(10)	31L5-01	**COLTRANE 50 (P) (C&DC2) (GS)** A Balding 7-9-4	O Murphy
402	(1)	2-21275	**ENEMY 42 (T) (C) (GS)** I Williams 7-9-4	R Kingscote
403	(8)	11/22-11	**KYPRIOS 34 (C&DD) (GS)** A P O'Brien (IRE) 6-9-4	R L Moore
404	(6)	81-5211	**PRYDWEN 53 (S)** G Scott 6-9-4	C Shepherd
405	(9)	1223-31	**SWEET WILLIAM 28 (V) (GS)** J & T Gosden 5-9-4	R Havlin
406	(3)	80111-3	**TRAWLERMAN 82 (H) (C) (GS)** J & T Gosden 6-9-4	W Buick
407	(4)	4114-43	**TRUESHAN 28 (C3D2) (S)** A King 8-9-4	H Doyle
408	(5)	11/110-2	**VAUBAN 34 (T) (C) (S)** W P Mullins (IRE) 6-9-4	C T Keane
409	(2)	11135-3	**GREGORY 34 (C)** J & T Gosden 4-9-3	James Doyle
410	(7)	6231-22	**CAIUS CHORISTER 28 (BF) (G)** D Menuisier 5-9-1	B Sayette

Probable SP: 4-5 Kyprios, 11-2 Gregory, 13-2 Vauban, 8 Trawlerman, 12 Caius Chorister, 14 Coltrane, 16 Sweet William.

FAVOURITES: 1 0 1 2 1 1 1 2 1 0 **AGES:** 4 4 4 6 4 5 6 4 4 4

2023: Courage Mon Ami 4 9 3 (Frankie Dettori) 15-2 J & T Gosden drawn (9) 12 ran.

TIMEFORM **KYPRIOS** suffered an interrupted campaign in 2023 but he was a high-class stayer the season before, the first of his 4 Group 1 wins coming in this race, and the way he shaped when winning both starts this term suggests he's as good as ever. He can provide his trainer with a record-extending ninth success, though the Gosden stable has an excellent recent record in this and hold a strong hand once again with **Gregory** and **Trawlerman**, who will both be suited by this marathon trip.

5.05 —BRITANNIA STAKES (HERITAGE HANDICAP) (STR) (2) (3-Y-O) £120,000 added (£61,848) 1m (32) ITV

No.	Draw	Form	Horse / Trainer / Weight	Jockey
501	(13)	13-2	**KING'S GAMBLE 19 (BF)** R Beckett 9-10	D Tudhope
502	(28)	21-23	**WHIP CRACKER 48** R Hughes 9-8	J Crowley
503	(27)	2445-11	**FOLLOW ME 26** R O'Sullivan (IRE) 9-7	S Foley
504	(24)	135-115	**BERGAMASCO 75 (D3)** J Davison (IRE) 9-6	NON RUNNER
505	(22)	14L-47	**STARLORE 26** Sir M Stoute 9-5	R Kingscote
506	(6)	1217L	**CUBAN TIGER 55 (D)** K R Burke 9-5	C Lee
507	(10)	193-106	**WATCH MY TRACER 32 (H) (G)** G Scott 9-5	H Turner
508	(8)	137-624	**BLUE LEMONS 26 (S)** R Hannon 9-5	J P Spencer
509	(19)	12-32	**INVOLVEMENT 26 (G)** S & E Crisford 9-3	C Shepherd
510	(18)	116950-	**BOBSLEIGH 30 (D2) (G)** E J-Houghton 9-3	C Bishop
511	(17)	1121-30	**DRAGON LEADER 26 (G)** C Cox 9-2	K Shoemark
512	(9)	1735-02	**SON OF MAN 11 (S)** J Chapple-Hyam 9-0	David Egan
513	(20)	2310-11	**WATCHA MATEY 19 (D) (G)** H Palmer 9-0	C T Keane
514	(21)	54-1211	**VERCORS 30 (P) (S)** F Chappet (FR) 9-0	Aurelien Lemaitre
515	(1)	15-2	**COGITATE 92 (S)** C Hills 9-0	H Doyle
516	(5)	1124	**CRACKING GOLD 55** C Cox 8-13	Rossa Ryan
517	(33)	2210-12	**MISSION TO MOON 20 (BF) (S)** R Varian 8-13	O Murphy
518	(25)	11-2341	**DASHING DARCEY 12 (D3)** R Varian 8-13	S De Sousa
519	(29)	312-1	**QIRAT 26** R Beckett 8-13	H Crouch
520	(30)	5-141	**ARCTIC THUNDER 41 (C)** A Balding 8-13	D Probert
521	(3)	431-1	**VOLTERRA 48 (D)** K Ryan 8-12	N Callan
522	(2)	26-163	**AIR COMMANDER 32 (V) (BF)** A P O'Brien (IRE) 8-11	R L Moore
523	(15)	43-11	**MICKLEY 20 (S)** E Bethell 8-11	C Rodriguez
524	(16)	23-621	**SKUKUZA 34 (D)** E Dunlop 8-11	W Buick
525	(31)	32-41	**NATIVE WARRIOR 30 (D)** K R Burke 8-11	James Doyle
526	(13)	314513	**SAFWAN 43 (S)** R Beckett 8-10	E Greatrex
527	(4)	5-81	**MILETUS 45 (D) (S)** C Hills 8-10	NON RUNNER
528	(26)	3052-23	**THE CAMDEN COLT 48 (G)** R Hannon 8-10	S M Levey
529	(12)	70-1	**MONKEY ISLAND 34** B Meehan 8-10	H Davies
530	(11)	31-1L	**SIR LES PATTERSON 26** Harry Eustace 8-9	Billy Loughnane
531	(32)	1-42	**LAUTREC 34 (B) (D)** J & T Gosden 8-9	B Sayette
532	(7)	083-165	**GREY CUBAN 19** H Palmer 8-9	T Marquand

Probable SP: 10 Qirat, 12 Native Warrior, Mickley, Volterra, Starlore, Air Commander, 14 Skukuza, Lautrec. **FAVOURITES:** 0 0 3 0 0 0 2 0 0 1 (W 8-13).

2023: Docklands 3 9 2 (Hayley Turner) 6-1 Fav Harry Eustace drawn (18) 29 ran.

TIMEFORM Kevin Ryan's **VOLTERRA** has had the form of his Newmarket handicap debut success boosted and might prove the answer to a typically wide-open renewal. The way **Qirat** stormed home to land a valuable 7f event at Goodwood last month suggests he'll be suited by the step up to 1m and he's second choice. **Mickley** is another who promises to benefit from 1m and is also shortlisted along with **Starlore**, who was a big eyecatcher behind **Qirat** at Goodwood.

TRACK FACTS: JACKPOT & PRINCIPAL MEETING. R-H course. GOING: Good to firm. **STALLS:** Straight centre; round inside. **Top jockey:** Ryan Moore. **Top trainer:** J & T Gosden.

5.40 —HAMPTON COURT STAKES (GROUP 3) (1) (3-Y-O) £150,000 added (£85,065) 1m 1f 212yds (12) ITV

No.	Draw	Form	Horse / Trainer / Weight	Jockey
601	(9)	1212-L	**AL MUSMAK 35 (C) (S)** R Varian 9-2	S De Sousa
602	(2)	5241-17	**BELLUM JUSTUM 19 (D) (G)** A Balding 9-2	O Murphy
603	(1)	15-12	**BRACKEN'S LAUGH 42 (S)** R Hughes 9-2	D Tudhope
604	(10)	21L-316	**CAVIAR HEIGHTS 35 (D)** K R Burke 9-2	C Lee
605	(3)	21-322	**FIRST LOOK 18** A Fabre (FR) 9-2	James Doyle
606	(12)	17-13	**JAYAREBE 42 (BF) (G)** B Meehan 9-2	S M Levey
607	(7)	812-1	**KING'S GAMBIT 33 (D) (S)** Harry Charlton 9-2	W Buick
608	(6)	343-241	**PORTLAND 14 (S)** A P O'Brien (IRE) 9-2	R L Moore
609	(4)	1-33	**SONS AND LOVERS 28 (G)** J Chapple-Hyam 9-2	T Marquand
610	(11)	2115-22	**STROMBERG 25** J P O'Brien (IRE) 9-2	D McMonagle
611	(5)	421-3	**TARAJ 39** D K Weld (IRE) 9-2	David Egan
612	(8)	2261-45	**UNDER THE SUN 55 (T) (G)** H Palmer 9-2	Rossa Ryan

Probable SP: 5-2 King's Gambit, 4 First Look, 6 Bracken's Laugh, 8 Jayarebe, Portland, 12 Sons And Lovers, 14 Bellum Justum.

FAVOURITES: 1 1 0 2 2 0 2 1 2 0

2023: Waipiro 3 9 2 (Tom Marquand) 7-1 E Walker drawn (7) 16 ran.

TIMEFORM **KING'S GAMBIT** made a mockery of an opening mark of 93 on return at Newbury last month and with further progress on the cards, Harry Charlton's charge is fancied to take the step up to pattern company in his stride at the expense of French-raider **First Look**, who found only an unbeaten colt too strong in the Prix du Jockey Club at Chantilly. **Bracken's Laugh** and **Taraj** (who changed hands for £480,000 on Monday) can fight out third.

6.15 —BUCKINGHAM PALACE STAKES (HANDICAP) (2) £110,000 added (£56,694) 7f (29) ITV4

No.	Draw	Form	Horse / Trainer / Weight	Jockey
1	(32)	525-549	**MAKE ME KING 33 (P) (D) (S)** H Al Jehani (UAE) 4-9-12	W Buick
2	(18)	502-572	**NORTHERN EXPRESS 35 (D5) (GS)** M Dods 6-9-12	P Mulrennan
3	(22)	L33030-	**AWAAL 243 (T) (BF2) (S)** S & E Crisford 5-9-11	O Murphy
4	(21)	6475-30	**MOSTABSHIR 40 (B) (G)** J & T Gosden 4-9-11	J Crowley
5	(23)	266-901	**CARRYTHEONE 33 (HT) (D2)** M Bell 7-9-10	P Dobbs
6	(16)	11L-547	**BARADAR 26 (PT) (C&DD4BF) (S)** G Boughey 6-9-10	David Egan
7	(29)	0-L4061	**RHOSCOLYN 20 (T) (D7) (GS)** D O'Meara 6-9-10	J P Spencer
8	(12)	01062-5	**ROPEY GUEST 40 (V) (D2) (GS)** G Margarson 7-9-9	T P Queally
9	(1)	0203-21	**PERCY'S LAD 41 (G)** D & C Kubler 6-9-8	R Kingscote
10	(10)	16-5970	**TACARIB BAY 39 (P) (D) (S)** R Hannon 5-9-8	Alec Voikhansky (3)
11	(26)	1382-21	**ENGLISH OAK 26 (D) (GS)** E Walker 4-9-8	James Doyle
12	(9)	4126-10	**MR PROFESSOR 47 (GS)** D F Davis 5-9-7	S De Sousa
13	(2)	049-601	**FINN'S CHARM (5lbex) 11 (D2) (S)** C Johnston 4-9-7	J Fanning
14	(25)	12505-4	**ALZAHIR 41 (HT) (D)** D O'Meara 4-9-5	D Tudhope
15	(24)	478837	**BOPEDRO 20 (V) (D3) (GS)** D O'Meara 8-9-5	Jason Watson
16	(11)	136-130	**DARK THIRTY 20 (D2)** R Hannon 4-9-5	S M Levey
17	(3)	70L0-42	**GORAK 33 (P) (D2) (GS)** C Fellowes 5-9-5	C Shepherd
18	(28)	323-913	**DIVINE LIBRA 33 (D2BF) (S)** C Hills 4-9-4	R L Moore
19	(31)	3-95066	**KOY KOY 20 (T) (DBF) (G)** G Boughey 5-9-4	Billy Loughnane
20	(27)	L47053	**THE X O 20** J Ryan 4-9-4	Rossa Ryan
21	(19)	247224	**BILLYJOH 12 (BF2)** M Appleby 4-9-2	H Doyle
22	(13)	2858L7	**SUMMERGHAND 33 (V) (GS)** D O'Meara 10-9-2	D McMonagle
23	(30)	60L-505	**FRESH 12 (T) (C&D2C) (GS)** J Fanshawe 7-9-1	H Turner
24	(20)	15103-0	**MAYWAKE 19 (D5) (S)** R Fahey 6-9-1	Oisin Orr
25	(6)	229-235	**SOUS LA NEIGE 20** G Hemon (FR) 4-9-1	T Marquand
26	(5)	3/2410-1	**KINGS TIME 41 (T) (D2)** J Harrington (IRE) 4-9-1	S Foley
27	(4)	2-36220	**GREATGADIAN 83 (G)** R Varian 6-9-1	A Keeley (3)
28	(17)	35-30L1	**STERLING KNIGHT (5lbex) 7 (P) (CD3) (GS)** E Dunlop 5-9-1	C T Keane
29	(14)	745-108	**MUSTAJAAB 12 (D2) (S)** W Muir & C Grassick 4-9-0	L Edmunds

Probable SP: 5 English Oak, 8 Divine Libra, 10 Mostabshir, 12 Northern Express, Awaal, 14 Percy's Lad, 16 Carrytheone, Gorak.

FAVOURITES: – – – – – – 0 0 0 0 (W 9-3). **AGES:** – – – – – – 4 4 4 4

2023: Witch Hunter 4 9 10 (Jamie Spencer) 50-1 R Hannon drawn (24) 29 ran.

TIMEFORM **ENGLISH OAK** is another one to be added to Wathnan Racing's burgeoning roster after a most impressive display at Haydock and he's comfortably the most progressive sort in this field, so he's preferred to **Divine Libra**, who is also going the right way. **Awaal** has an excellent record fresh and should have been primed for a big run.

DRAW ADVANTAGE: High on straight course. **Placed in the race last year:** 4.25 Coltrane (2nd); 6.15 Northern Express (3rd). **Headgear first time:** 2.30 Rock Hunter, Saturday Flirt, 3.45 Port Fairy, 5.05 Air Commander, Vercors, Watch My Tracer, 6.15 Awaal, Koy Koy, Make Me King. **Longest travellers:** Sheema's Rose (3.45), Vercors (5.05), First Look (5.40), Sous La Neige (6.15) France; Whistlejacket (2.30), Naval Force (3.05), Autumn Winter (3.05), Gallantly (3.05), Chantilly (3.05), Gasper De Lemos (3.05), Rubies Are Red (3.45), Port Fairy (3.45), Kyprios (4.25), Air Commander (5.05), Portland (5.40) Ireland; Vauban (4.25) Ireland; Highland Bling (3.05), Follow Me (5.05), Taraj (5.40), Kings Time (6.15) Ireland; Bergamasco (5.05) Ireland; Arizona Blaze (2.30), Neski Sherelski (3.05), Je Zous (3.45), Higher Leaves (3.45), Stromberg (5.40) Ireland; Make Me King (6.15) United Arab Emirates; Northern Express (6.15) 259 miles; Saturday Flirt (2.30) United States. **Drop in Class:** 3.05 Kamboo is down 4 grades on last run (Group 1 to Class 2); 5.40 Bellum Justum (2). **First run since wind surgery:** None today.

AFTERNOON RESULTS

ROYAL ASCOT

2.30 — LEOVANNI (James Doyle) **22-1** 1; **Mighty Eriu 50-1** 2; **Maw Lam 50-1** 3. **24 ran.** (K R Burke). 1¾, nk. **Tote:** 24.30; 5.35, 12.45, 5.30, 5.20. Ex: 1308.20. Tc: 42168.60. Tf: 22261.40. CSF: 836.92. NRs: Glorious Kitty, Kuwaitya.

3.05 — ILLINOIS (R L Moore) **7-4F** 1; **Highbury 3-1(2ndFav)** 2; **Birdman 13-2** 3. **11 ran.** (A P O'Brien (IRE)). 1¼, ¾. **Tote:** 2.75; 1.25, 1.45, 1.95. Ex: 9.30. Tc: 26.43. Tf: 31.70. CSF: 6.46. NR: Grosvenor Square.

3.45 — RUNNING LION (O Murphy) **6-1** 1; **Laurel 4-1(2ndFav)** 2; **Doom 12-1** 3. **14 ran.** (J & T Gosden). 2l, 2l. **Tote:** 7.00; 2.60, 2.25, 4.25. Ex: 45.70. Tc: 286.55. Tf: 417.90. CSF: 27.37.

4.25 — AUGUSTE RODIN (R L Moore) **13-8F** 1; **Zarakem 33-1** 2; **Horizon Dore 7-1** 3. **10 ran.** (A P O'Brien (IRE)). ¾, 1l. **Tote:** 2.63; 1.35, 7.45, 1.95. Ex: 58.10. Tc: 269.76. Tf: 262.40. CSF: 60.03.

5.05 — WILD TIGER (O Murphy) **11-2JtFav** 1; Sonny Liston 17-2 2; Perotto 25-1 3; Daysofourlives 20-1 4. **29 ran.** (S bin Suroor). hd, ¾, ½. **Tote:** 7.40; 2.40, 3.35, 5.75, 5.60. Ex: 75.80. Tc: 1155.16. Tf: 2043.50. CSF: 42.06. NRs: Imperial Fighter, Silent Film.

5.40 — DOHA (H Crouch) **10-1** 1; Hopeful 13-2F 2; Victoria Falls 20-1 3; Rowayeh 10-1 4. **24 ran.** (R Beckett). hd, 4¼, hd. **Tote:** 11.70; 3.65, 2.45, 5.80, 3.75. Ex: 115.60. Tc: 1345.58. Tf: 1963.60. CSF: 66.64. NR: Vetiver.

6.15 — AIN'T NOBODY (J P Spencer) **5-1** 1; **Gabaldon 16-1** 2; **Aviation Time 28-1** 3. **27 ran.** (K Ryan). 1l, ½. **Tote:** 6.40; 2.15, 2.65, 6.35, 20.20. Ex: 82.40. Tc: 2120.22. Tf: 1631.90. CSF: 77.26. NR: Jm Jhingree.

Jackpot £30,106.00, with £15,354.08 carried over.
Placepot £916.60. **Q'pot** £35.00.

HAMILTON

1.45 — TWOFORTHEGUTTER (Mark Winn) **11-10F** 1; **The Navigator 7-2(2ndFav)** 2; **Crystal Guard 6-1** 3. **7 ran.** (C Kellett). nk, shd. **Tote:** 2.10; 1.10, 2.00. Ex: 5.50. Tc: 13.22. Tf: 15.60. CSF: 4.64. NRs: Reams Of Love, Trailblazer.

2.15 — JUNGLE DRUMS (Oisin Orr) **15-8(2ndFav)** 1; **Joshuas Dream 25-1** 2; **Georgecandoit 8-13F** 3. **5 ran.** (K R Burke). hd, nk. **Tote:** 2.88; 1.20, 5.60. Ex: 30.60. Tf: 41.40. CSF: 33.92.

2.50 — SHAZANI (C Beasley) **17-2** 1; **Pretty Thing 7-1** 2; **Who Wants Me 28-1** 3. **8 ran.** (C Johnston). 1¾, 1¾. **Tote:** 9.60; 2.20, 2.00, 6.10. Ex: 82.10. Tf: 1986.30. CSF: 67.18.

3.30 — PURPLE GOWN (B Robinson) **18-1** 1; **Spanish Hustle 11-8F** 2; **Bohemian Breeze 13-2** 3. **7 ran.** (A Nicol). ns, 1¾. **Tote:** 21.70; 1.40, 6.90. Ex: 53.10. Tc: 187.93. Tf: 197.70. CSF: 42.87. NR: Flying Scotsman.

4.10 — JAZZ SCENE (P Mulrennan) **7-4F** 1; **Mysteryofthesands 5-2(2ndFav)** 2; **Finn Ironside 16-1** 3. **5 ran.** (Sir M Prescott). ¾, 1½. **Tote:** 2.75; 1.60, 1.50. Ex: 6.10. Tf: 36.60. CSF: 6.28.

4.50 — ROSE BRANCH (P Mulrennan) **13-2** 1; **Naturalia 9-4F** 2; **Persian Phoenix 5-2(2ndFav)** 3. **6 ran.** (H Palmer). ¾, 3l. **Tote:** 7.50; 3.30, 1.70. Ex: 23.20. Tf: 81.60. CSF: 20.86. NR: Takes Time.

5.25 — HOT TEAM (Rhys Elliott) **10-3F** 1; **Paco's Pride 15-2** 2; **National Question 18-1** 3. **10 ran.** (P Morris). 3¾, ¾. **Tote:** 4.34; 1.40, 2.40, 4.20. Ex: 20.90. Tc: 389.25. Tf: 257.00. CSF: 28.17. NR: Fanzone.

Placepot £163.20. **Q'pot** £47.40.

WORCESTER

2.05 — SOLID FUEL (J Best) **40-1** 1; **Tonto Foley 5-2F** 2; **Gambie Tiep 15-2** 3. **11 ran.** (Joanne Thomason-Murphy). 1¼, 5l. **Tote:** 45.90; 9.50, 1.50, 2.70. Ex: 222.70. Tc: 880.37. Tf: 1449.10. CSF: 144.01.

2.40 — BOB BOB RICARD (Jonjo O'Neill Jr) **6-1** 1; **Duke Of Luckley 11-2** 2; **Cape Vidal 9-2F** 3. **13 ran.** (Jonjo & A O'Neill). 4l, 3½. **Tote:** 7.00; 1.80, 2.70, 2.10. Ex: 39.40. Tc: 166.48. Tf: 222.50. CSF: 39.31.

3.15 — HOLOKEA (J Bowen) **11-2** 1; **All Well And Good 13-2** 2; **Elysian Knight 11-2** 3. **11 ran.** (P & M Bowen). ¾, 3l. **Tote:** 6.50; 2.10, 2.10, 1.90. Ex: 35.60. Tf: 158.70. CSF: 39.17. NR: As Good As Can Be.

3.55 — SEA PRINCE (K Woods) **28-1** 1; **Forget The Way 3-1(2ndFav)** 2; **Hidalgo De L'isle 16-1** 3. **11 ran.** (A Hales). shd, ½. **Tote:** 37.60; 6.80, 1.40, 3.60. Ex: 160.00. Tc: 1443.65. Tf: 3056.20. CSF: 112.03. NR: Fandabidozi.

4.35 — SEEYOUINMYDREAMS (H Cobden) **1-4F** 1; **Kintaro 16-1** 2; **Double Oban 7-1(2ndFav)** 3. **11 ran.** (P Nicholls). 13l, nk. **Tote:** 1.25; 1.02, 2.20, 2.00. Ex: 6.30. Tf: 22.50. CSF: 6.83. NR: Frenelope.

5.15 — MELTON MOSSY (A Wedge) **11-10F** 1; **Ten Ten Twenty 11-1** 2; **Gorcombe Moonshine 10-1** 3. **10 ran.** (E Williams). 2l, 1½. **Tote:** 2.10; 1.20, 3.10, 2.20. Ex: 17.40. Tc: 82.89. Tf: 104.00. CSF: 14.16. NR: Eloso.

5.50 — HILLSIN (J Turner) **6-1** 1; **Carnet De Stage 16-1** 2; **Emanate 13-2** 3. **11 ran.** (A Jones). ½, 1l. **Tote:** 7.30; 2.50, 5.20, 2.10. Ex: 104.60. Tc: 653.29. Tf: 1144.10. CSF: 97.01. NR: Voodoo Doll.

Placepot £41.60. **Q'pot** £13.40.

SAEED bin Suroor was back in the limelight when Wild Tiger won the Royal Hunt Cup. Bin Suroor was once Godolphin's leading trainer, with 250 horses, but now he has 40 in his stable. 'When you win at Royal Ascot, it makes everything worth it,' he said.

EVENING RESULTS

NOTTINGHAM

5.45 — COUNTESS CIARA (J Bryan) **9-2** 1; **Koulikoro 18-1** 2; **Hackney Diamonds 13-2** 3. **11 ran.** (A Watson). nk, ½. **Tote:** 5.50; 4.20, 2.10, 1.90. Ex: 88.60. Tf: 512.60. CSF: 80.27. NR: Standput.

6.20 — DARK DREAMER (J Mitchell) **11-4F** 1; **Ten Commitments 11-2** 2; **Let's Get Em 17-2** 3. **7 ran.** (R Cowell). ½, 2¾. **Tote:** 3.75; 1.80, 2.60. Ex: 12.30. Tc: 102.77. Tf: 91.00. CSF: 16.66. NRs: Bandello, Want Want.

6.50 — FAUSTUS (J Mitchell) **12-1** 1; **Four Adaay 8-1** 2; **Miss Brazen 14-1** 3. **10 ran.** (R Cowell). ¾, ¾. **Tote:** 13.00; 3.90, 2.40, 4.30. Ex: 119.00. Tc: 1365.89. Tf: 1174.40. CSF: 104.19.

7.20 — SISTERANDBROTHER (P Mathers) **11-2(2ndFav)** 1; **Laser Focus 6-4F** 2; **Showy 7-1** 3. **10 ran.** (K Frost). hd, 2l. **Tote:** 7.40; 1.80, 1.20, 2.20. Ex: 16.40. Tc: 59.53. Tf: 86.90. CSF: 13.85. NRs: Bletchley Storm, Mc'ted, The Pug.

7.50 — FORTNUM (P Cosgrave) **11-8F** 1; **Lady Of Time 33-1** 2; **Emerald City 6-1** 3. **8 ran.** (G Boughey). 1l, 2¼. **Tote:** 2.50; 1.40, 6.10, 1.60. Ex: 58.60. Tc: 217.26. Tf: 326.90. CSF: 53.73. NRs: Daring Leader, Lincoln Royal, Pop Noodle.

8.20 — ANDROMEDAS KINGDOM (S D Bowen) **7-2(2ndFav)** 1; **Astronomica 15-2** 2; **Adelabella 10-3F** 3. **11 ran.** (M Appleby). ½, 2l. **Tote:** 4.50; 1.60, 2.60, 1.60. Ex: 38.50. Tc: 95.59. Tf: 214.30. CSF: 29.48. NR: Ballsbridge.

8.50 — ROCK N ROLL PINKIE (M Ghiani) **18-5F** 1; **Young Merlin 4-1(Jt2ndFav)** 2; **Highland Frolic 22-1** 3. **11 ran.** (I Furtado). 2¼, ¾. **Tote:** 4.60; 1.70, 1.80, 5.90. Ex: 25.20. Tc: 275.81. Tf: 326.60. CSF: 17.43. NR: Roman Tempest.

Placepot £165.20. **Q'pot** £31.80.

RIPON

6.00 — BACOR (Grace McEntee) **6-1** 1; **She Went Whoosh 5-1(2ndFav)** 2; **Party Bear 13-2** 3. **7 ran.** (G Boughey). 2½, 1l. **Tote:** 7.00; 2.60, 2.30. Ex: 27.80. Tf: 110.70. CSF: 33.77.

6.35 — FLOWSTATE (D Nolan) **18-1** 1; **Fox Spirit 11-1** 2; **Canon's House 18-1** 3. **12 ran.** (D O'Meara). 2¼, 1½. **Tote:** 22.20; 3.30, 2.80, 5.40. Ex: 209.80. Tf: 4713.50. CSF: 205.46. NR: Maris Angel.

7.05 — KARDIA (C Rodriguez) **evensF** 1; **Genesius 2-1(2ndFav)** 2; **Yurinov 15-2** 3. **4 ran.** (E Bethell). 2l, 4¼. **Tote:** 2.00; Ex: 3.00. Tf: 7.40. CSF: 3.17.

7.35 — BATAL ZABEEL (S Gray) **10-1** 1; **The Good Biscuit 5-2F** 2; **Moyola 4-1(2ndFav)** 3. **8 ran.** (K Ryan). hd, 1¾. **Tote:** 11.00; 2.50, 1.50, 1.50. Ex: 36.40. Tc: 117.66. Tf: 180.50. CSF: 34.17.

8.05 — DANCINGWITHMYSELF (C Rodriguez) **11-2** 1; **Ribkana 20-1** 2; **Organic 6-5F** 3. **8 ran.** (M Bell). 2¼, 2¾. **Tote:** 6.50; 1.70, 4.00, 1.10. Ex: 105.90. Tc: 213.38. Tf: 240.40. CSF: 100.37.

8.35 — DUNNINGTON LAD (H Shaw) **33-1** 1; **Protest Rally 6-1** 2; **Foreseeable Future 10-3F** 3. **Golden Gal 20-1** 3. **10 ran.** (P Winks). ½, ¾, dht. **Tote:** 35.60; 8.40, 1.80, 2.20. Ex: 265.70. Tc: 350.83, 2071.83. Tf: 640.00, 2438.60. CSF: 219.05. NR: Prospect. **Placepot** £525.60. **Q'pot** £6.60.

Down and out? Murray is treated before his withdrawal REX

I lost power in my right leg, couldn't move. I wish I'd never gone out there

Tearful Murray set for scan after bowing out at Queen's

MATTHEW LAMBERT
at Queen's Club

ANDY MURRAY will have a scan today on a back injury that threatens to cost him a final appearance at Wimbledon.

The 37-year-old has been struggling with nerve damage and the pain suddenly knifed into his right leg just before his second-round match at the cinch Championships. He lasted five games against Australia's Jordan Thompson before retiring.

Wimbledon begins in 11 days' time and Murray said: 'Maybe there is something that can be done between now and then. I will get scans tomorrow and get it rechecked and see if there's anything that can be done.'

There were gasps from the Queen's Club crowd as Murray lumbered his way through the warm-up. On the first point, Thompson returned serve and Murray took a ghastly, halting step and got nowhere near the ball.

He played on for another four games in the forlorn hope that his back and leg might loosen up, but packed it in at 1-4. What will surely be his final act at the Queen's Club was a double fault — hardly a fitting end for a five-time champion.

'I have been struggling with my back for a while,' he said. 'Then I had loss of power in my right leg. Loss of motor control, had no co-ordination, couldn't move.

'My back's been sore in the build-up to the tournament. It was pretty sore in my match yesterday. I wasn't comfortable playing, but I was able to manage it. During my pre-match warm-up I was pretty uncomfortable and then I walked up the stairs to go out. Just before going on the court, I didn't have the usual strength in my right leg. It was not a usual feeling.

'Then the first two balls I hit in the warm-up, my right leg, it was so unco-ordinated. It just was not working properly.'

It was ghastly to watch a man who once flew across the court, mouth agape as if to gobble up the ball, lurching around the grass. A deathly hush descended on the Queen's Club as this macabre dance played out.

'If I had felt that when I was practising before the match, there is no way I would have played,' said Murray. 'I wish I hadn't gone on the court, to be honest, because it was pretty awkward for everyone.

'There was nothing I could do and then there is part of you that wants to go out there and see if it gets better and maybe feels better with a bit of treatment, but that wasn't the case.' Astonishingly for a man who has suffered as much as he has, this was the first time Murray had retired mid-match since 2013.

That was against Marcel Granollers in Rome and was also due to back pain. He had surgery in September of that year, but it only partially fixed the issue and he has been battling it ever since.

Clay has always been the surface that has caused Murray's back particular problems.

He played the French Open for the first time since 2020 this year and struggled physically, saying afterwards he would have a 'procedure' — believed to be a pain-killing injection — which in previous years he had received before the clay season.

It would be cruel indeed if that desire to have one last visit to his least productive Grand Slam ends up costing him a final appearance at the place he loves the most.

It is yet another bitter stroke of fate landed on a man who has already had far more than his fair share. Asked if he is worried he will miss Wimbledon, Murray replied: 'I wouldn't know,' before adding that the procedure after Roland Garros was in the left side of his back, leaving hope that a similar intervention on the other side could help. 'I don't know exactly what the problem is,' he added. 'I have been dealing with back pain for the last 10, 11 years of my career, but I have never experienced that before.

'So I don't know what the procedure will be or what to expect, really.'

Distraught: Murray is visibly upset as he talks about his injury PA

Murray has hinted that he was eyeing either Wimbledon or the Olympics as his farewell tournament before retirement.

Very little is certain going forward, but one thing you can be sure of is Murray will move heaven and earth to be at the All England Club a week on Monday when the Championships commence.

The British flag still flies at the Queen's Club though, with national No 1 Jack Draper taking on defending champion Carlos Alcaraz this afternoon.

Late bloomer Billy Harris is also in action and was among those to receive a Wimbledon wildcard yesterday.

Fourteen of the 16 wildcards were handed out, with Emma Raducanu among those included.

Rabada's class ends USA hopes of shock

CRICKET
LAWRENCE BOOTH
in Gros Islet

THE USA gave South Africa a scare in the first game of the World Cup Super Eights before succumbing to an 18-run defeat in Antigua. With the South Africans set for a big boost to their net run-rate in a group also involving England and West Indies, they were pegged back by a blistering unbeaten 80 in 47 balls from the USA's South African-born batsman Andries Gous. Set 195, the Americans settled for a respectable 176 for six.

South Africa had arrived in Antigua after four low-scoring group games in New York and St Vincent. Finally, on a good surface at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, they could free their arms. Opener Quinton de Kock blasted 74 off 40 balls and hit five of his team's 10 sixes. Captain Aiden Markram contributed 46 off 32, before he became the second victim for left-arm seamer Saurabh Netravalkar.

Heinrich Klaasen pummelled three late sixes to lift the South Africans to 194 for four. Steven Taylor gave the USA chase a lively start before spooning Kagiso Rabada to mid-off for 24, then a collapse left them 76 for five in the 12th over. But Gous put on 91 in seven overs with Harmeet Singh, and the USA needed 28 off 12 balls when Rabada's class closed the game down.

Mail *To see how England got on against the West Indies go to: dailymail.co.uk/sport*

SPORT IN BRIEF

EURO 2024
Group A

GERMANY.......(1) 2 HUNGARY......(0) 0
Musiala 22
Gundogan 67
54,000

SCOTLAND.......(1) 1 SWITZERLAND...(1) 1
McTominay 13 Shaqiri 26

Group B

CROATIA........(0) 2 ALBANIA......(1) 2
Kramaric 74 Laci 11
Gjasula 76 (og) Gjasula 90
46,784

CRICKET

T20 WORLD CUP — Super Eights, Group 2, North Sound: South Africa 194-4 (20 overs, Q de Kock 74), **USA** 176-6 (20 overs, A Gous 80no). South Africa (2pts) beat USA by 18 runs.

TENNIS

ATP CINCH CH'SHIPS (Queen's Club) **— 2nd rnd:** R Hijikata (A) bt M Arnaldi (It) 7-6 (7-0) 7-6 (9-7); S Korda (US) bt G Dimitrov (Bul) 6-4 3-6 7-5; J Thompson (A) bt A Murray (GB) 4-1 ret; T Fritz (US) bt M Raonic (Can) 7-6 (7-5) 6-4.

ATP TERRA WORTMANN OPEN (Halle) **— Selected 2nd rnd:** Z Zhang (Chn) bt D Medvedev (Rus) 6-3 2-6 7-6 (7-5); A Zverev (G) bt L Sonego (It) 6-4 7-6 (7-5).

WTA ROTHESAY CLASSIC (Birmingham) **— 2nd rnd:** A Tomljanovic (A) bt L Zhu (Chn) 6-7 (6-8) 6-1 6-4; E Cocciaretto (It) bt S Stephens (US) 6-4 6-2; L Fernandez (Can) bt V Golubic (Swi) 4-6 7-5 6-3; A Potapova (Rus) bt L Bronzetti (It) 6-3 7-5.

TODAY'S ACTION

EURO 2024
Group B

Spain v Italy .... (8.0)
Live on ITV1

Group C

Denmark v England ....(5.0)
Live on BBC 1
Slovenia v Serbia ....(2.0)
Live on ITV 1

CRICKET — T20 World Cup, Super Eights, Group 1: Afghanistan v India (Bridgetown, 3.30), Australia v Bangladesh (North Sound, 1.30am tonight).

T20 Blast, North Group: Warwickshire v Northamptonshire (Edgbaston, 7.0). Yorkshire v Lancashire (Headingley, 7.15). **South Group:** Essex v Hampshire (Chelmsford, 7.0). Glamorgan v Gloucestershire (Sophia Gardens, 6.30). Middlesex v Surrey (Lord's, 7.0). Sussex v Kent (Hove, 7.0).

GOLF — USPGA Tour Travelers Championship (Connecticut). **DP World Tour KLM Open** (Amsterdam, Netherlands). **LPGA PGA Championship** (Sahalee CC, Washington).

RUGBY LEAGUE — Betfred Super League: Castleford v Hull K R (8.0).

Marcus is right call for Japan but Fin MUST be long-term 10

Big talent: fly-half Fin Smith has had a fine season GETTY IMAGES

By DAN BIGGAR
Former Wales fly-half

WITH Owen Farrell and George Ford unavailable this summer, England are entering a new No 10 era this weekend in Japan and then New Zealand.

Farrell or Ford have been England's fly-half for a decade so you might think that Steve Borthwick would be in a tricky position without them. Not so. Fortunately for him, Borthwick has two incredible young players to pick from in Marcus Smith and Fin Smith. Both are huge talents. Choosing is very difficult but that's why Steve gets paid the big money.

He has gone with Marcus to start with Fin on the bench for Saturday's clash with Japan, naming the team early to try to kill some of the debate. That's the right call for this game, but Fin should be the first choice for the two July Tests with New Zealand. This is why...

It's really important Borthwick backs his preferred choice with a clear plan. When I was a young 10 starting out with Wales and in a similar position to the one Marcus and Fin are in now, I felt like I had to take every chance I was given or else I wouldn't play again for a while.

If you feel like you are going to be in and out of the team like I did — and I had quality rivals such as James Hook, Stephen Jones and Rhys Priestland — it doesn't allow you to play your best rugby. You worry about making mistakes and can tighten up.

The best thing that happened to me with Wales was when I knew the 10 jersey was mine. That was around 2015 and it was no surprise I played some good rugby at that year's World Cup. I wish I'd had that backing earlier in my career.

I toured with Marcus with the Lions in 2021. He is a wonderful player capable of individual brilliance. Him starting in Tokyo is the right call as he's had more time in the England camp this summer than Fin who played in the Premiership play-offs for Northampton and went off with cramp in the final against Bath. I'm sure England are managing him a bit, but when it comes to the All Blacks Tests I don't think you can ignore the season Fin has had.

His development has been superb. He's guided Northampton to the Premiership title and been voted player of the year.

It's not like Marcus has had a bad season. But with Fin riding a wave of confidence right now and with momentum in his game, then if you're not going to make him No 10 now, when are you?

It's a good thing that neither Ford nor Farrell are around this summer as it rids England of a safety net those two have provided for so long. England have to go in a new direction now and that's hugely exciting.

The two Smiths are different. Fin fits the Borthwick mould. He is more like Ford than Marcus. Fin brings control. He's in charge at Northampton and while it might look like Saints play free-flowing rugby, I know how structured their game plan is.

Fin's strength is his ability to bring others into play. He's also a very strong defender which Borthwick will like. Fin is very good at moving the ball at the line. He likes to have options and pods of forwards next to him. He is less of a running threat than Marcus but has a lovely delay on his passes that causes opposition defenders to jam in. That creates space for others. Fin is the best playmaker in England at the minute.

Marcus's game is less structured. He likes to hang behind the ball carriers and then take his opportunity to attack. He likes to take time to scan the field for gaps.

He's also improved his kicking game. He is very good at the chip over the defensive line. Marcus has also worked hard on his control. In the past he might have tried too much at the wrong time, but he picks his moments now.

His running threat is his huge strength with his speed and footwork. Opposition defences can't switch off as he can challenge the line every time he gets the ball. He has a wicked step and can't be given time. If he has that, he will unleash his full bag of tricks.

One thing Marcus doesn't get enough credit for is his toughness. He's not the biggest, but he puts his body on the line — as we saw at last year's World Cup against Fiji.

Borthwick has talked about the possibility of both Smiths being on the field at the same time with Fin at 10 and Marcus at full back. To me those comments show that he is perhaps looking at Marcus to come off the bench in New Zealand when the game breaks up.

One other thing in Fin's favour is the Northampton connection. He is one of six Saints backs in the squad. In the past, England have built their XV around a core of players from the Premiership's best sides — think Leicester and Saracens more recently.

Fin's relationship with Alex Mitchell, who is starting at No 9 against Japan, could be crucial to England having solid foundations.

Borthwick can't please everyone. And the danger of him doing as I have suggested and backing Fin unequivocally for the two All Blacks games is that Marcus throws his toys out the pram. But I don't think that will happen as Marcus is a great pro.

The best teams I've been a part of are where everyone knows and accepts their role for the good of the team. For example, when Wales won a Grand Slam in 2019 I accepted my job was to come off the bench and support Gareth Anscombe.

One thing is for sure. Both Smiths will have to kick a lot more with England this summer than they do with their clubs and I know Fin has worked hard on his tactical kicking game.

That will be vital in New Zealand because the All Blacks put boot to ball more than most international sides. But Fin can thrive in that environment.

It's going to be tough. It's unlikely to all be plain sailing. But we have to remember, he's still only 22 and that he also more than deserves his shot.

WATCHING BRIEF...

JAPAN v ENGLAND

Kick-off: Saturday 6.50am.
TV: LIVE on RugbyPassTV.
Referee: Luc Ramos (France).

Slade delight that England are sticking with the fast show

CHRIS FOY
Rugby Correspondent in Tokyo

GOOD news for England fans who savoured the tactical liberation in the Six Nations — the fast show will continue during this summer tour of Japan and New Zealand.

Having stumbled into a sudden era of enlightenment, the national team have no wish to revert to the dark days of trying to get rid of the ball, or betraying a chronic shortage of imagination and accuracy when they did have it.

Losing to Scotland at Murrayfield in February prompted soul searching in the camp and a profound shift in the national team's tactical approach. What followed was a pulsating one-point victory over Ireland at Twickenham before a narrow loss in France which was notable for another outbreak of fluency and flair from Steve Borthwick's side.

Now, it seems there is no going back, which was well received by the players. That much was apparent when centre Henry Slade was asked to assess his Test career. The Devonian is blessed with a remarkable range of creative gifts, but at international level he has so rarely had a consistent opportunity to showcase them.

'I've had a great career for England, but there is probably a bit of frustration in terms of how we have played, how I've played and how many opportunities I've had to get on the ball,' he said. 'I do think, now, the way we've tried to progress is a much more enjoyable way to play. I can put myself in the game a lot more and feel a lot more excited each time coming into camp.

'After the Scotland game, we had a chat as coaches and players and decided we needed to be more brave, call for the ball more and get it to the outside channels. Because we have such dangerous players out there and we want to get the ball in their hands.

'The best way to do that is to play a more expansive game. It is definitely an enjoyable team to be attacking in.'

WORLD AT HIS FEET

REVEALED: Why Spain's wonderkid, 16, has flags on his boots ...and the secret of his goal celebration

MATT BARLOW in Gelsenkirchen

THE most striking aspect of seeing Lamine Yamal play for the first time is not his technique, though he accepts and moves the ball with effortless grace, eyes up, scanning the changing shapes in the game around him.

Nor his lightning speed off the mark, although UEFA's speed gun clocked him at 19.6mph during his impressive Euros debut against Croatia — one blistering counter-attack in the second half sparked panic in the opposition ranks.

Yamal, who will again be the centre of attention when he lines up against Italy tonight, is supremely gifted, yet the secret to making this abundance of natural talent work in elite international football at the age of 16 is his temperament. He does the simple things well, a blessing for any manager.

Think back to Cristiano Ronaldo's arrival in Manchester in 2003. At 18, he was desperate to show the world his extravagant talent in a blur of stepovers, which he edited from his game as he became one of football's great goal machines.

Yamal does not seem interested in showing off. He is composed, his attitude professional when he could be forgiven for being otherwise. He glided through the game in Berlin rarely making a poor decision. As content to roll a pass back to full back Dani Carvajal, or zip a short one inside to Pedri and move for the return, as he was to get hold of the ball and run at Josko Gvardiol.

The fact he may do any of these things is what made it difficult for Gvardiol. Yamal is not easy to read. Despite being a predominantly left-footed right winger, he has the confidence to drive down the outside, but he is selective and has the ability to threaten one action and do another.

The teasing cross for Spain's third against Croatia, swerved in from the right with his left foot for Carvajal, had echoes of Chris Waddle at Sheffield Wednesday, unstoppable even when everyone knew what he wanted to do. That that was peak Waddle, however, master of his craft after the years at Marseille. At 16, Waddle had not even joined Tow Law Town.

Yamal's advanced maturity is the most striking aspect of his game. None of this is likely to come as a surprise to those who have traced his extraordinary rise to prominence in Spain.

Yamal hails from Rocafonda, a built-up residential neighbourhood in Mataro, a town of about 120,000 situated 20 miles up the coast north-east of Barcelona.

His father Mounir is from Morocco and his mother Sheila from Equatorial Guinea — he has the flag of each country sewn into his customised boots — and he retains strong links to his home, where his uncle's bakery is adorned with a graffiti mural of Yamal doing his trademark goal celebration, which involves forming the numbers three, zero and four with his fingers to represent the postcode of Rocafonda 304.

It is a proudly multicultural neighbourhood, if deprived with little to shout about until Yamal put it on the map by skittling a cluster of records, since when journalists have flocked regularly to learn his backstory.

HOW he perfected his skills on a concrete pitch. How he was always shy and reserved but smiling and happy. How he does not seek recognition. How those with an eye for football did not need long to figure out the kid had something special.

One glimpse at seven convinced a local scout to call someone at Barcelona. One trial and he was packing his bag for La Masia, the acclaimed academy where they hothouse their most precious talent. One cameo in the first team and there was no getting him out. In April last year, Yamal made his debut for Barcelona at 15 years and 290 days, the youngest to play for the club for more than a century.

Inevitably, there were instant comparisons with Lionel Messi, as a left-footed forward with prodigious talent, which head coach Xavi both invited and resisted — just as he warned against overhype and burnout but continued picking him because, let's face it, managers will pick players most likely to win them games.

Yamal made 50 appearances last season for his club, sparking concern among those who have seen Ansu Fati, Gavi and Pedri all hit by injury problems once exposed to a heavy workload at an elite level as teenagers.

Still, with Morocco circling, Luis de la Fuente handed him a Spain debut last September. The youngest footballer to represent the country at 16 and 57 days scored on his debut against Georgia.

'Touched by a magic wand,' was De la Fuente's assessment, which sums it all up so beautifully. There is something magical about him.

As he steps from one challenge to the next, Yamal generates new levels of expectation because fans, media, even his team-mates and manager will rely on these levels of performance, then ask questions if the standards slip.

Jorge Mendes did not waste any time swooping in to sign him from agent Ivan de la Pena, the former Spain midfielder. With fame and fortune comes another series of challenges, but La Masia graduates seem better adjusted than most to all that.

Yamal admitted at the start of the tournament that he intends to focus on his studies during downtime at the Euros. 'I brought my homework here because I'm in the fourth year (of ESO, the final year of compulsory school study in Spain),' he said. 'I have online classes, too, and those are going fine. I hope the teacher doesn't get mad at me.'

Then there are the physical tests which come from playing elite men's football in a young body still developing. Yamal said he gained 8kg and grew two centimetres last season.

There are many moving parts to consider if Yamal is to produce the stellar career which seems inevitable when we see him step so coolly on to a stage like Euro 2024.

Nothing is certain but his ability is there for all to see and his attitude seems to be sound.

There's no harm in being excited about what happens next.

WATCHING BRIEF...

SPAIN v ITALY

Kick-off: 8pm, Arena AufSchalke, Gelsenkirchen. **TV: LIVE** on ITV1. **Referee:** Slavko Vincic (Slovenia).

Family guy: Yamal has Morocco and Equatorial Guinea flags on his boots for his parents and (inset) celebrates by indicating his postcode '304' GETTY/AP

Albania dare to dream they can survive Group of Death

By NATHAN SALT

CROATIA 2
Kramaric 74
Gjasula 76 (og)

ALBANIA 2
Laci 11
Gjasula 90+5

IT WAS back in March when an injured Klaus Gjasula was wondering whether his Euro 2024 experience would simply be watching it from his sofa.

The 34-year-old, injured and left out of the Albania team for friendlies against Sweden and Chile, saw his window closing to make the squad.

So to steal the show against Croatia, both for good and bad, was a real redemption story.

It was redemption just to make it to Germany. It was redemption, too, on a sweltering hot day in Hamburg, to bounce back after his own goal put Croatia seconds away from a crucial victory.

Just as he had fought to make the Albania squad, Gjasula fought to finish with a flourish here and when he scored with 94 minutes and 23 seconds on the clock, it was the latest equaliser in European Championship history.

Now with one Group B game to go, in which both Albania and Croatia face a fight to make the knockout stages, belief will not be in short supply in Sylvinho's team after this dramatic finish.

'The 2-2 result is fine, but with a bit of luck we could have scored the third goal!' Gjasula said. 'We know that the match with Spain will be very difficult, but if we play like today, anything can happen.'

Despite racing into an early lead through Qazim Laci, Albania did not take their chances to build on it and were made to pay when, in the space of 147 seconds midway through the second half, they went from 1-0 up to 2-1 down.

First, birthday boy Andrej Kramaric equalised and then Gjasula, sent on from the bench, turned the ball into his own net.

Desperation kicked in and Albania threw caution to the wind, switching to a 4-2-4 formation.

They eventually landed the killer blow with seconds left on the clock, as Gjasula became only the second player in Euros history to score an own goal and a 'proper' goal in the same match, after Anton Ondrus for Czechoslovakia in 1976.

'It was a very tough match with two different halves,' Croatia boss Zlatko Dalic said. 'In the second half, we gave our all, went up 2-1, and then conceded that goal. It's very unfortunate, but everything is still in our hands. Now we move on to Italy — nothing is lost yet.'

Pure joy: Gjasula (third left) celebrates his late equaliser AP

GROUP B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Spain	1	1	0	0	3	0	3	3
Italy	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	3
Albania	2	0	1	1	3	4	-1	1
Croatia	2	0	1	1	2	5	-3	1

CROATIA (4-3-3): Livakovic 6.5; Juranovic 6, Sutalo 7, Gvardiol 6, Perisic 7.5 (Sosa 84min); Modric 6, Brozovic 5 (Mario Pasalic 46, 7), Kovacic 7.5; Majer 5 (Sucic 46, 7), Petkovic 6 (**BUDIMIR 69, 8**), Kramaric 7 (Baturina 85). **Scorers:** Kramaric 74, Gjasula 76 (og). **Booked:** Ivusic. **Manager:** Zlatko Dalic 7.

ALBANIA (4-3-3): Strakosha 6; Hysaj 6, Ajeti 6.5, Djimsiti 6.5, Mitaj 6; Ramadani 6.5 (Hoxha 85), Asllani 7, Laci 7 (Gjasula 73, 6); Asani 7 (Seferi 64, 6), Manaj 6.5 (Daku 85), Bajrami 7. **Scorers:** Laci 11, Gjasula 90+5. **Booked:** Hysaj, Daku, Gjasula. **Manager:** Sylvinho 7.5.

Referee: Francois Letexier (Fra) 6.
Attendance: 46,784.

FOOTBALL SHORTS

Cooper closing in on Leicester job

LEICESTER look set to appoint Steve Cooper as their new boss. The Foxes are in advanced talks with the former Nottingham Forest and Swansea manager about replacing Enzo Maresca. And if all goes to plan, the appointment will be confirmed by the weekend. Graham Potter had been linked with the role, but the Foxes have opted for Cooper.

Lazio in move for £30m Greenwood

LAZIO have opened talks with Manchester United over a £30million swoop for Mason Greenwood. The Italians have long been interested in the striker, who spent last season on loan at Getafe. Juventus and Napoli are also keen, as are clubs in Spain and Germany. Greenwood is keen to move abroad again as he rebuilds his life after rape charges against him were dropped.

Gritty Scots bounce back to set up shot at knockouts

McTominay gives Tartan Army hope

IAN HERBERT
at RheinEnergieStadion Cologne

SCOTLAND (McTominay 13)	1
SWITZERLAND (Shaqiri 26)	1

A TIDE of royal blue support on the banks of the Rhine lifted Scotland to another level last night and kept their place in this tournament alive.

The team they urged on were confronted by opponents who threatened them and just briefly, looked like they might bury them, but Scotland were lifted to another level. Steve Clarke's men took the point which means a win against Hungary in Stuttgart on Sunday could take them to the knockout stages of a major finals for the first time.

You would not say it was a European sophistication from Scotland. Just direct, vertical, muscular highly effective football. And it worked. Amid the cacophony of noise, they struck a post and could walk away in the knowledge that they were the better side.

The Tartan Army had amassed on the steps of Cologne's monumental cathedral by lunchtime, belting out 'No Scotland, no party' — the joke being that there was no point heading into that place to pray, because it wasn't big enough for the help the country now needed. The sun came out as they drifted towards Innenstadt and up to the stadium and long before kick-off approached, the supreme Scottish optimism was back.

The Cologne FC anthem sung at this stadium takes the tune of the *Bonnie Banks of Loch Lomond* — the lyricist liked it — and even those too young to remember it were being forcibly reminded of the Boys of '96 — the Scotland team, that is, who beat Switzerland 1-0 in the European Championship in Birmingham that summer, keeping alive the hope of progress to the knockout rounds.

Scotland haven't won a tournament match since.

The lamentable opening performance against the hosts had clearly got to Steve Clarke — taciturn and tetchy when asked about this date with destiny. It had been left to Andy Robertson to provide some Celtic spirit. His admission that there had been 'fear' in this team when they played the Germans was a frank one. And though the rendition Scottish anthem was beyond belief — 'We can still rise now. And be the nation again' — you still worried for those men. Did they and their besotted nation want this too much?

The Scots were looking to locate the golden spirit of the qualification campaign which they have lost along the road. They did so by getting at the Swiss, delivering more bite and spit in the first six minutes than they had the entire 96 against the Germans. There were two Scottish corners in that time, John McGinn striking the ball deep from the off.

There was also the mercurial skill of Billy Gilmour who was recalled to midfield — and who should never have been absent from it against the Germans — finding the spaces and the passes between the lines. No player was more involved or more creative in the first half.

Yes, Scotland's opening goal was a moment of extreme good fortune — Scott McTominay's strike deflecting in off defender

Highs and lows: Scotland take the lead as McTominay's strike is diverted in by Schar (above) but Shaqiri (left) hit a superb leveller REX/AP

Musiala masterclass is latest reminder of England's loss

RIATH AL-SAMARRAI
at the MHPArena, Stuttgart

GERMANY (Musiala 22, Gundogan 67)	2
HUNGARY	0

TWO thoughts are gaining traction with each game Germany play at this tournament. One is that they are shaping into the favourites and the other concerns the identities of whichever daft souls allowed Jamal Musiala to get away from English football. What a wonderful player and what an enduring source of regret for England that he switched allegiances three years ago. It's pointless to seek wisdom after the event, but Julian Nagelsmann, Bayern Munich and all of Germany must truly love the squirming. Here, in the city of Musiala's birth, came the latest instalment, with his strike against Scotland on Friday followed by another against Hungary before he made a decisive contribution to the second, finished by Ilkay Gundogan.

At 21 years of age, this quick-footed, fast-thinking bolt of promise is not just part of a great team but driving them to new heights, too. That much was clear in Stuttgart, because it was precisely the sort of game in need of smart lock-pickers, for the Hungary that lost so meekly to Switzerland was not the same Hungary that resurfaced against Germany.

The statistics will undersell a side that held only 37 per cent of possession, but out of such a defensive crouch they threw decent punches and in doing so represented a tricky second act for the Germans after the Scottish walkover. Indeed, there were multiple occasions in the first half when Nagelsmann's system looked vulnerable to quick counters up the flanks, especially when they were accompanied by late runs through the middle from Dominik Szoboszlai.

A blueprint? Maybe. But it would be an exaggeration to say the hosts were rattled. They were too good for that and too rich in their talents, especially within that frontline of rainmakers and supported by the genius of Toni Kroos. Sitting back against them will surely only work up to a point and that was ultimately the message, but Hungary at least had a right to feel proud and also a little aggrieved. The latter is a right their manager Marco Rossi exercised.

His post-match fury concerned Musiala's opener, and specifically the apparent foul by Gundogan on Willi Orban, that went unpunished by the referee, Danny Makkelie, as well as VAR. Orban seemed to be looking for an invitation to go to ground in his own six-yard box, but he was shoved

Fabian Schar — but Gilmour played a key role in the build-up. His chest control on the halfway line, facing his own goal, and measured pass sent Robertson galloping away. The captain seemed to fractionally overhit the pass to Callum McGregor, who turned back to weigh the ball inside for McTominay to strike.

But there is a reason why Scotland had conceded 26 goals in 10 games. Their defence is prone to catastrophic error. Though some will remember the Swiss equaliser as a moment of Xherdan Shaqiri sublimity — the 32-year-old unravelled the most beautiful strike — Scottish incompetence led to it. The rearguard dithered, with two weak touches before Anthony Ralston effectively played the ball into Shaqiri's path to gift the goal. Scotland were on the rack then and it was hard not to fear for them in the face of swift, precise elegant Swiss counter-attack. The Tartan Army held its breath as Ruben Vargas slipped a reverse pass to Dan Ndoye on the overlap, watching him glide around Kieran Tierney and unfurl a pass that Angus Dunn palmed away.

Ndoye, the Bologna forward, causing the defence a lot of trouble, was a hair's breadth offside when he darted in front of Dunn to take and net a ball. The Scottish defence, abandoning wide areas to block the central space, were making themselves vulnerable to attacks down the flanks.

Scotland needed to find another gear though it was tough and for a time they lived perennially on the edge. The physical effort of trying to hold off Ndoye, as he raced onto an aerial ball, finished Tierney's night. His hamstring snapped and he was carried from the field. A devastating outcome both for him and Scotland.

It was the Tartan Army who lifted things again — maintaining a noise the likes of which this tournament simply has not seen. 'Oh Scott McTominay!' they sang. 'I love him till my heart aches.'

And the blue shirts really were lifted in tandem. Gilmour was still the stand-out player, pressing the Swiss hard. McTominay was another of the company sergeants driving the Scots on.

It was McTominay who won the free-kick on the right side of the Swiss box, despatched by Robertson, at which Grant Hanley, racing ahead of Schar, threw himself. The ball crashed against the post. McGinn, Robertson and Gilmour laced a move together which delivered another chance and the Swiss could no longer locate the threat.

Unfathomably, Clarke removed Gilmour for Kenny McClean. Robertson, who was superb all night, headed a ball at the back post and Manuel Akanji denied McTominay a certain tap-in. He then arced a dangerous ball into the Swiss six-yard box, though there was no Scottish player to take it. When the whistle blew, McTominay was on his haunches, red-faced in the knowledge that this Scotland team can still make history here.

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Germany (Q)	2	2	0	0	7	1	6	6
Switzerland	2	1	1	0	4	2	2	4
Scotland	2	0	1	1	2	6	-4	1
Hungary	2	0	0	2	1	5	-4	0

SCOTLAND (3-4-1-2): Gunn 6; Hendry 6, Hanley 6, Tierney 6 (McKenna 61min, 6); Ralston 5, **GILMOUR 7.5** (McLean 79), McGregor 6, Robertson 7; McTominay 7; Adams 6 (Shankland 90), McGinn 5 (Christie 90). **Scorer:** McTominay 13. **Booked:** McTominay, McKenna, McGinn. **Manager:** Steve Clarke 7.

SWITZERLAND (3-4-1-2): Sommer 6; Schar 5, Akanji 7, Rodriguez 6; Widmer 6 (Stergiou 86), Freuler 6 (Sierro 75, 5), Xhaka 6, Aebischer 6; Shaqiri 7.5 (Embolo 60, 6); Ndoye 7 (Amdouni 86), Vargas 6 (Rieder 75, 5). **Scorer:** Shaqiri 26. **Booked:** Rodriguez, Sierro. **Manager:** Murat Yakin 6.

Referee: Ivan Kruzliak (Svk) 6. **Att:** 42,711.

and from the loose ball Gundogan assisted Musiala for 1-0.

Rossi was furious, saying: 'I've never looked for excuses but what the referee did tonight, come on. 'The referee was guilty of double standards. He allowed a push on Orban and for a similar situation (later) whistled. Germany would have won anyway but the referee was the worst on the pitch.'

The result guaranteed Germany's passage to the knockout stage and left Hungary in a mess that felt out of keeping with their performance.

Unlike the Scots, who were butchered by this same German starting XI, Rossi's side were aware of the need to suffocate the spaces around Kroos in the knowledge that he can orchestrate chaos from anywhere he plants his feet. That act of asphyxiation was embedded in a plan that often saw the Hungarians defending with two blocks of five.

There was success in the method, shown by a variety of good chances on the break, one of which fell to Roland Sallai inside 30 seconds and another that saw a goal disallowed for Sallai at 1-0 down. Szoboszlai was particularly dangerous, not to mention via his free-kicks, having forced a good first-half save from Manuel Neuer. Alas, parked buses can struggle against fast-moving trains and Germany were predictably more dangerous at just about every interval.

Gundogan was immense when the hosts had the ball and his reward was the second goal, constructed out of patience against a packed Hungarian area. It was Musiala who cut through with the line-breaking ball to Maximilian Mittelstadt before the overlapping left back centred to Gundogan for a one-touch finish.

The one that got away: Jamal Musiala celebrates PA

GERMANY (4-2-3-1): Neuer 6; Kimmich 6.5, Rudiger 6.5, Tah 7.5, Mittelstadt 8; Andrich 6.5 (Can 72min, 6), Kroos 7; Wirtz 6 (Sane 58, 6), **GUNDOGAN 8.5** (Undav 84), Musiala 8 (Fuhrich 72, 6); Havertz 7 (Fullkrug 58, 6). **Scorers:** Musiala 22, Gundogan 67. **Booked:** Rudiger, Mittelstadt. **Manager:** Julian Nagelsmann 7.

HUNGARY (3-4-2-1): Gulacsi 7; Fiola 6, Orban 6, Dardai 5; Bolla 6 (Adam 75, 6), Nagy 5 (Kleinheisler 64, 6), Schafer 5, Kerkez 7 (Nagy 75, 6); Szoboszlai 7.5, Sallai 6.5 (Csoboth 87); Varga 6.5 (Gazdag 87). **Booked:** Varga, Szobozslai. **Manager:** Marco Rossi 6.

Referee: Danny Makkelie (Ned) 6. **Attendance:** 54,000.

IAN LADYMAN
Football Editor
in Frankfurt

Floored: Kane has little joy against Serbia
GETTY IMAGES

Yes, Kane is dropping too deep. But who can blame him when he's so rarely given the ball?

THERE was a moment 15 minutes from time in England's defeat of Serbia in Gelsenkirchen that could have changed the way their opening game of Euro 2024 has subsequently been viewed.

Substitute Jarrod Bowen made space on the right and dropped a cross straight on to the head of Harry Kane at the far post. The England captain's contact was clean and powerful only for Serbia goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic to touch the ball brilliantly, and rather unexpectedly, on to the underside of the crossbar.

In that moment Kane was not only denied his 64th international goal, but also the opportunity to stop what appears to be a biennial tournament debate in its tracks.

Kane, coming off the back of a prolific season with Bayern Munich, did not score in the group stage of the last World Cup, prompting some chat about his place in Gareth Southgate's team.

It had been the same in the Euros of 2021, where he did not score until England beat Germany in the round of 16. Now we are in that place again, a place where for some strange reason Kane's role, value and positioning is under scrutiny.

He is not the first England centre forward to suffer this way. Gary Lineker was under great pressure at the 1986 World Cup in Mexico before he scored a 25-minute first-half hat-trick to almost beat Poland on his own. Alan Shearer was similarly scrutinised ahead of the 1996 and 2000 European Championships. Shearer, as he usually did, responded with goals.

So too, surely, will Kane, maybe even this evening against Denmark in England's second game. He is arguably the most accomplished centre forward in Europe.

Against Serbia, as England lost control of the game in the second half, Kane was dragged deeper and deeper both in search of the ball and often in an effort to add weight and physicality to what had become an unexpectedly dogged defensive effort.

Kane often plays in this fashion. He is not a top-of-the-formation striker like, for example, Erling Haaland, or indeed like Shearer and Lineker used to be. He likes to drop in to pick up the ball and use it. He is a superb passer with an excellent range. If he is not spending enough time in the opposition penalty area then the chances are something has gone wrong with England's play behind him and this is how it was on Sunday. Kane against Serbia was a symptom of an England problem rather than the cause of it. He touched the ball just 24 times and only twice in the first half. He did not receive a pass from Phil Foden all night and only one from Bukayo Saka.

'He's the skipper and he leads by example,' Kyle Walker, Kane's former Tottenham team-mate, said yesterday. 'Sometimes putting the ball in the back of the net isn't always his job. Sometimes you have to do the ugly part of football, which is nine times out of 10 what I'm doing. He's probably seen what I've had to do over the years in defending for your life. It's what you have to do.

'In tournament football, there's no standout individual. We've had it for years at Manchester City where we don't look at one player and say we lean on them solely for the responsibility of defending or scoring. We're in it as a team. He

Cancelled train puts me on track for fine dining

POSTCARD FROM GERMANY

CRAIG HOPE
reports from Weimarer Land

FROM the brutality of the grey and industrial architecture of the Ruhr valley, to the beauty of the lakeside Weimarer Land and a Michelin-star chef serving us dinner in a matter of hours, and all thanks to a cancelled train!

Leaving behind Essen and Gelsenkirchen on Monday morning, it was no surprise to discover the train south to my Erfurt base had disappeared from the schedule.

It meant I had to think on my feet, and very soon I was running on them, squeezing though the doors of an earlier alternative. Via Dusseldorf and Frankfurt I journeyed, delayed trains running into each other and making my connections seamless — even if for the wrong reasons.

This proved to be something of a sliding-doors moment, quite literally. For had I not made that first train, I would have missed the 'Food Masters' event organised for the England press pack by the staff at Weimarer Land.

It still needed a trolley dash back through Erfurt, my case on wheels rattling over the ancient cobbles — this on the one day the sun had come out — but, home and not so dry, I made a *Stars In Their Eyes* transformation from dishevelled traveller to a sunset diner.

Off we went by bus to the wonderful Hans am See venue overlooking the serene Hohenfelden reservoir, where the region's chief administrator and 'Wine Princess' Emma were waiting to greet us.

The Michelin-star chef who works in the kitchen at the England team hotel was overseeing the outdoor grills — don't ask him for team news, he's signed an NDA! — and we were treated to what tasted like the finest food and wine in all of Germany.

It felt like a wedding, which was ironic, because when I sent the pictures home to my wife — wrestling with our three young boys at bedtime — her reply spoke of divorce.

Anyway, it was on to Frankfurt

HARRY JUST CAN'T GET THE SERVICE!

■ IT'S no wonder Kane looked so isolated against Serbia — the person most likely to pass to him was Jordan Pickford with his long goal-kicks, while the two full backs were also in the top four:

PASSES TO KANE	
J Pickford	6
J Bellingham	5
K Walker, K Trippier	2
B Saka, J Bowen, T Alexander-Arnold	1

PS PHIL FODEN played the full 90 minutes in behind Kane and had 65 touches, but did not complete a single pass to the striker, while defensive midfielder Declan Rice had 90 touches and yet also did not once find Kane.

2 Walker, 4 Rice, 5 Stones, 6 Guehi, 7 Saka, 8 A-Arnold, **9 KANE**, 10 Bellingham, 11 Foden, 12 Trippier.

First half

Second half

Direction of play

ENGLAND'S average position map v Serbia — every player dropped deeper in the second half with 50 per cent of the ball. But even in the first half with 53 per cent, Kane only had two touches.

has done a great job, dug in for the team, which has got us the vital three points we needed to kickstart the tournament.'

There was something off about England's performance against Serbia, for sure, and Kane's match statistics point to that.

His most regular supply — six passes — was from goalkeeper Jordan Pickford, who kicked the ball long more often than any England goalkeeper for quite some time. Second on the list was Jude Bellingham with five passes and that probably reflected how close the two men were standing to each other on occasion.

BELLINGHAM himself was a little guilty of trying to do everything on his own on Sunday. Southgate alluded to this yesterday — albeit it in the gentlest possible way — by suggesting the emotion of the occasion and his early goal may have spiked the 20-year-old's adrenaline early on.

Too much of England's football was cluttered from that point on and as much as Serbia did not create any clearcut openings, they carried a menace and threat that saw their fancied opponents looking for the whistle to signal full time.

Kane will have his say in this tournament, certainly — he always does — and that moment will arrive quickly once England unpick some of the tangled strings from Gelsenkirchen. At times it is worth reminding ourselves that they won the game. In England we do seem particularly adept at hand wringing and that does not just come from the media.

France beat Austria 1-0 thanks to an own goal. Portugal needed two defensive errors to beat Czech Republic right at the death while Belgium lost 1-0 to Slovakia.

These are results that should serve to place England's opening effort in proper context, but it was interesting to hear Southgate reveal yesterday that he had gathered his players together to tell them to ignore the din emanating from both mainstream and social media.

'He had a brief talk with us on Tuesday night,' said Walker. 'Normally there are 20 Premier League teams to write about and fill columns about. Now all eyes are on us over here representing our country, so obviously there is going to be massive scrutiny on certain performances or certain things we do.

'But we cannot take away that we came away from there with three points on the board, a clean sheet and in good stead for this game against Denmark.'

Walker, 34, is playing in his fourth tournament for Southgate and knows it is always this way.

Only the 2018 World Cup in Russia represented a free hit because, after the darkness of Euro 2016 and the Sam Allardyce palaver that followed, expectations were so low.

At the Euros in 2021, in Qatar 18 months later and now here in Germany it has been different and England are once again being reminded that winning is not always enough.

'When we get that scrutiny we have to take it as a positive because people expect so much of us,' reflected Walker.

'We know with the quality we have in the dressing room that we can go and score three or four in games, but in tournament football it is about winning and moving on.'

at sunset

yesterday for tonight's game against Denmark and, if I could reach out and touch the wood of the thick forest we passed through, I would — because our trains were all on time! Let us hope it stays that way. Then again, without a cancelled train I wouldn't have experienced the culinary delights of Weimarer Land. Swings and roundabouts, beef and wine.

Auf wiedersehen, **Craig.**

Dinner with a view: our man Craig with 'Wine Princess' Emma

Fall guy: Sterling wins this extra-time penalty in 2021 GETTY IMAGES

Denmark still stewing over Sterling 'dive'

By CRAIG HOPE
in Frankfurt

IN England, we have the 'Hand of God', the lingering pain of Diego Maradona and Mexico 86. In Denmark, they have 'Sterling's dive'.

While our thoughts moved on to the final of Euro 2020 after a 2-1 extra-time win over the Danes three years ago, the beaten team have never moved on, and nor are they ever likely to.

In their country, it is a cultural reference point every bit as sore as our loss to Argentina and Maradona's infamous goal.

Danes, from Peter Schmeichel and his son Kasper to Thomas Frank and national-team boss Kasper Hjulmand, believe that Raheem Sterling dived to win a 105th-minute penalty at Wembley that July night.

Not just that, there were two balls on the pitch in the seconds before the controversial award by Dutch referee Danny Makkelie. Harry Kane's spot-kick was saved by Schmeichel Jnr, but the England captain followed up to score the winner.

Sterling said at the time it was a clear penalty, that defender Joakim Maehle had 'stuck his leg out and touched my leg'. The Danes disagree.

'That was a hard moment,' Peter Schmeichel tells *Mail Sport*. 'Especially when we saw the VAR pictures back and it was clear there was no contact.'

During last night's press conference at Frankfurt's Waldstadion, English journalists were denied requests to ask questions as the briefing progressed. Perhaps there was a sense of the subject being revisited too much.

But as Kasper Schmeichel left the room, he told us: 'There were two balls on the pitch. Go back and check the pictures.'

We have, and he is right. Play should have been stopped. The penalty then survived a VAR check, but it was a soft award. England progressed only to lose on penalties to Italy in the final.

This week, the English camp have spoken about the Danes being out for revenge. Kasper Schmeichel and coach Hjulmand denied that, as you might expect, but Danish journalists here say that the former Leicester goalkeeper is still livid about the events of that night. He was certainly keen to make his point about the extra ball once our tapes had stopped rolling.

Hjulmand, meanwhile, did confess to a hurt that took longer to shake than he would have liked.

'Losing a semi-final when we were so close, and it was minor details that decided it, it took me a while to digest,' he said. 'I carried it for a while. But that kind of game also gives you motivation and inspires you. It makes you realise you can do it. Yes, it hurt, but it motivated us.'

And what about revenge?

'I am looking at a football match out of the front window,' said Hjulmand. 'But maybe some of the players are (out for revenge). Maybe some of them can find something in that.'

When the draw for this tournament was made in Hamburg in December, it was put to Hjulmand that the penalty award was a bad decision.

'You said it!' he replied. 'I still wake up at night thinking about that match.'

Brentford boss Frank has warned England that his compatriots will be fuelled by injustice.

'In Denmark, they will definitely remember that semi-final and the penalty,' he said. 'Or the foul on Sterling for the penalty. Borderline, let's say it that way.'

There is a feeling in Denmark they were cruelly denied a fairytale ending to a tournament that began with the horror of Christian Eriksen's collapse in their opening game.

The midfielder went some way to putting that to bed by scoring on his first European Championship appearance since during Sunday's 1-1 draw with Slovenia.

But until they beat England, the Danes will continue to have sleepless nights.

Southgate is right to stick with Foden and Trent. But if they falter again, he must turn to Plan B

OLIVER HOLT
Chief Sports Writer
in Frankfurt

TIME is the most precious commodity at a major football tournament and Gareth Southgate bought himself a golden slice of it when England beat Serbia in their opening group game in Gelsenkirchen on Sunday evening.

That 1-0 victory, courtesy of a brave, committed header from Jude Bellingham, bought the England boss more time to hone his selection, more time to experiment, more time to decide.

Sunday's win, however much lukewarm water has been poured over it since, took away much of the jeopardy that might otherwise have been attached to tonight's game against Denmark in Frankfurt.

It gave Southgate the latitude to smile wryly at some of the hand-wringing that has gone on since and remind England's players that even triumphs will be treated as disasters by the kind of observers who say he is a failure because England have not won the last three major tournaments in a row.

And it gave him the freedom to smile at the knee-jerkers urging him to drop Phil Foden, who had such a stellar season with Manchester City and was named the best player in the best league in the world, because he had one quiet game against the Serbs.

Southgate would baulk, no doubt, at the idea the Denmark game is a free hit because he knows how much criticism will come if England do not win, but the reality is a draw would most likely ensure his players qualify for the knockout stage with a game to spare. And then there will be no more free hits.

The result matters but what matters more is that it is a chance to breathe confidence back into Foden's attacking play, and as far as the experiment of playing Trent Alexander-Arnold in midfield is concerned, this is the final audition.

Alexander-Arnold, one of the best passers of the ball in English football, played well in the first half against Serbia without playing well enough to convince those who say it is madness for him to be learning the position during a tournament.

He is so lavishly talented and so adept at producing crosses and passes that can unlock even the lowest of low blocks that Southgate wants to persist with playing him alongside Declan Rice, the kind of bold move so many of his critics said he was incapable of. Now, apparently, he is being too bold.

Alexander-Arnold will come up against one of football's classiest midfield schemers in Frankfurt in Christian Eriksen and even though Southgate expects the Manchester United player to be in a more advanced role, watching him pull the strings for any side is always an education.

England's former left back Stuart Pearce yesterday said he believed Alexander-Arnold could exert the same kind of influence Glenn Hoddle once wielded for England and Southgate was asked if he saw the Liverpool player as a quarter-back passer or a metronome like Frenkie de Jong of the Netherlands, setting the tempo of the play.

'I think he's less likely to be a player who dictates tempo,' the England manager said. 'That's a different type and probably that's midfield players who have been in there for ever and really understand the flow of a game.

'What I do see is that range of passing and that ability to open up a defence that might be blocking spaces, defending low. He's somebody that's going to cause opposition players to be aware that we can play balls in behind them at any point with fantastic accuracy.

'His understanding of the game is good. All the defensive responsibilities we've asked of him, it's not necessarily been where he's played for many years but he's been really diligent and open to wanting to take that on board. So, look, we know it's a work in progress.

'We know it's something that's going to get a lot of attention as it's not been the norm but we feel it's something that can add to what we've got.'

It is hard to argue with Southgate about that. To win this European Championship, to get past sides with the quality of France, Germany, Portugal and Spain, Southgate knows playing safe is not going to be enough.

ENGLAND have suffered defeats by fine, fine margins in the last three major tournaments and a player such as Alexander-Arnold, if he settles into the role that has been mapped out for him, can tilt the balance the other way — in England's direction.

The same applies to Foden. Sunday was Bellingham's night. The Real Madrid player played, not for the first time, like a superhuman, and sometimes there is only room for one performance like that in a side. The rest slip into a supportive role. Maybe against Denmark, the roles will be reversed and Foden will take centre stage.

Fine, beguiling, brilliant players though they both are, and even though tournament football accelerates a team's evolution, calls for Southgate to replace Foden with Cole Palmer or Anthony Gordon at this stage have to be resisted.

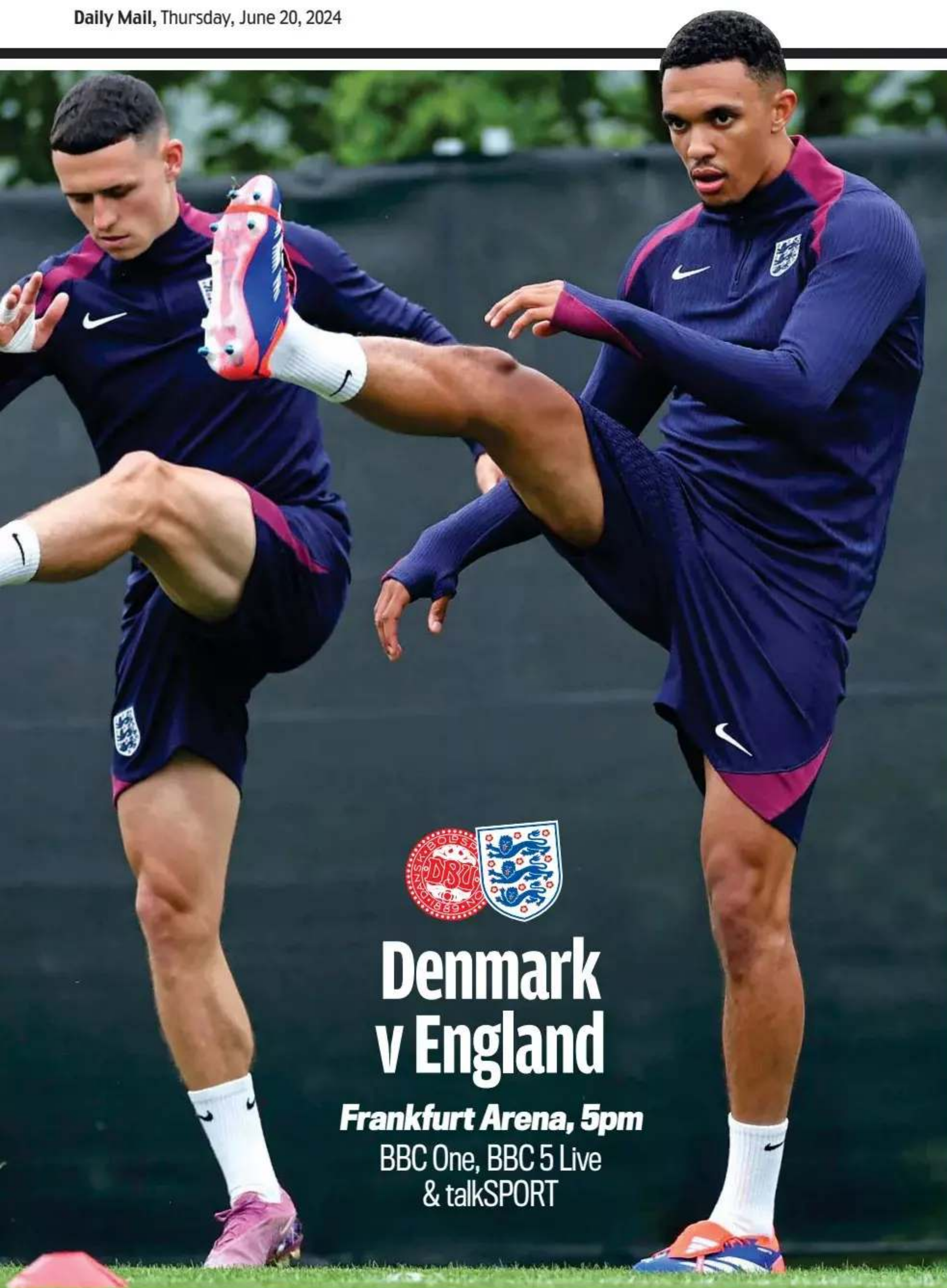
'There's going to be a narrative around a player, a couple of players, after every England game,' said Southgate, referring to the conversation about Foden.

'This is a different world to the one you experience at clubs. The players, as a collective, recognise that after the last couple of days. We talked with them about it. It's very rare at their club that they would win a game and experience what they have experienced over the last couple of days.

'I have to make sure I can guide them through that, let them understand it and recognise it's the reality of our world but that we shouldn't be thrown off track by it. We're in a good position, we know we want to play better, there are lot of things we did really well and we move towards tomorrow's game.'

Alexander-Arnold and Foden will get another chance against the Danes, as they should. If they excel, England will move on to Tuesday's game against Slovenia with increased confidence.

If they do not, Southgate will have to contemplate Plan B. And if that happens, time will no longer be his friend.

Leg work: Foden and Alexander-Arnold train yesterday as (inset, from left) Eze, Rice and Toney share a laugh GETTY IMAGES

Denmark v England

Frankfurt Arena, 5pm

BBC One, BBC 5 Live & talkSPORT

Big match guide

Probable line-ups

ENGLAND (4-2-3-1)

Jordan Pickford Caps: 62 Goals: 0

Kyle Walker Caps: 84 Goals: 1
John Stones Caps: 73 Goals: 3
Marc Guehi Caps: 12 Goals: 0
Kieran Trippier Caps: 49 Goals: 1

Declan Rice Caps: 52 Goals: 3
Trent Alexander-Arnold Caps: 26 Goals: 3

Bukayo Saka Caps: 34 Goals: 11
Jude Bellingham Caps: 30 Goals: 4
Phil Foden Caps: 35 Goals: 4

Harry Kane Caps: 92 Goals: 63

DENMARK (3-5-2)

Jonas Wind Caps: 27 Goals: 8
Christian Eriksen Caps: 131 Goals: 42
Rasmus Hojlund Caps: 15 Goals: 7

Rasmus Kristensen Caps: 21 Goals: 0
Christian Norgaard Caps: 26 Goals: 1
Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg Caps: 78 Goals: 10
Joakim Maehle Caps: 45 Goals: 11

Jannik Vestergaard Caps: 42 Goals: 3
Andreas Christensen Caps: 70 Goals: 3
Joachim Andersen Caps: 33 Goals: 0

Kasper Schmeichel Caps: 102 Goals: 0

ALL COMPETITIONS

P22 W13 D5 W4

76 THE first meeting between England and Denmark was a friendly at Idrettsparken in Norway in September 1948. The crowd of 48,000 watched a goalless draw.

ENGLAND'S GOALS RECORD v DENMARK

GOALS SCORED 34

GOALS CONCEDED 21

HOW THE 26-MAN SQUADS COMPARE

England		Denmark
651	Caps	1,096
99	International goals	139
90	Club trophies	85
26.1	Average age	27.7

5 ENGLAND have kept five consecutive clean sheets in group-stage matches at the Euros, the longest such run in the history of the competition.

11 DENMARK'S squad has 11 players who represent English clubs, with the most at Brentford (four), while two are at Leicester and two at Manchester United.

These sides have faced each other three times at major tournaments, with Denmark still looking for their first win:

EURO 92: England **DREW** 0-0 with Denmark (group stage).
WORLD CUP 2002: England **BEAT** Denmark 3-0 (round of 16).
EURO 2020: England **BEAT** Denmark 2-1 AET (semi-final).

Trippier fears fade but Shaw misses training

From Back Page

understand it and recognise it's the reality of our world, but that we shouldn't be thrown off track by it.

'We're in a good position but we want to play better. There are a lot of things we did really well (against Serbia) and we move towards the next game.'

Alexander-Arnold is expected to keep his place in midfield against the Danes. The Liverpool vice-captain, who plays at right back for his club, was substituted in the second half against Serbia.

Foden is set to continue on the left, while Kieran Trippier, who appeared to be in discomfort during the closing stages on Sunday, is in line to win his 50th cap at left back.

Southgate praised Foden for his performance against Serbia, saying: 'Phil did an exceptional job. Other players grabbed the attention, but the way he worked for the team, defended the spaces, real intelligence in how he played. There was a lot going on in the game, a lot tactically to solve, and we were happy with what Phil did.'

Luke Shaw is out of tonight's game as he recovers from a hamstring injury. The Manchester United left back missed squad training yesterday and worked alone.

THE KANE CONUNDRUM
IAN LADYMAN: PAGES 72-23

Murray's Wimbledon swansong in doubt after he quits Queen's

TENNIS: PAGE 66

BLOCK IT OUT

Southgate urges stars to ignore doom-mongers and crush Danes

By SAMI MOKBEL
in Frankfurt

GARETH SOUTHGATE has told his England players to block out the noise as he prepares to keep faith with Trent Alexander-Arnold and Phil Foden for tonight's clash with Denmark.

England have faced criticism from former players and pundits despite beating Serbia 1-0 in their first game of Euro 2024.

Alexander-Arnold's patchy display in an unfamiliar midfield role and Foden's lack of impact have put them under the spotlight

DENMARK v ENGLAND
TODAY, 5pm, BBC1

since Sunday's victory. But speaking here in Frankfurt before England's second Group C match, Southgate said: 'There's going to be a narrative over a couple of players after every England game.

'This is a different world to the one you experience at clubs. The players recognise that after the last couple of days. We've talked with them about it.

'It's very rare at their club that they would win a game and experience what they've experienced over the last couple of days. I have to guide them through that, let them

TURN TO PAGE 75, COL 1

Great Scott

McTOMINAY STRIKE KEEPS SCOTLAND'S DREAM ALIVE

SCOTLAND	1
SWITZERLAND	1
GERMANY	2
HUNGARY	0
CROATIA	2
ALBANIA	2

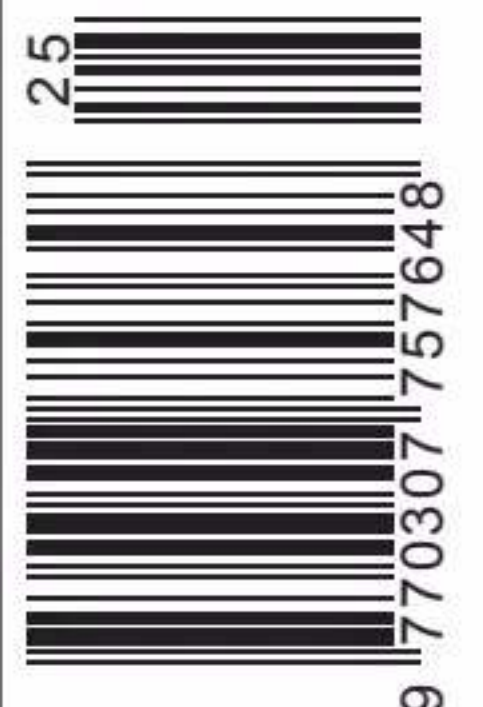
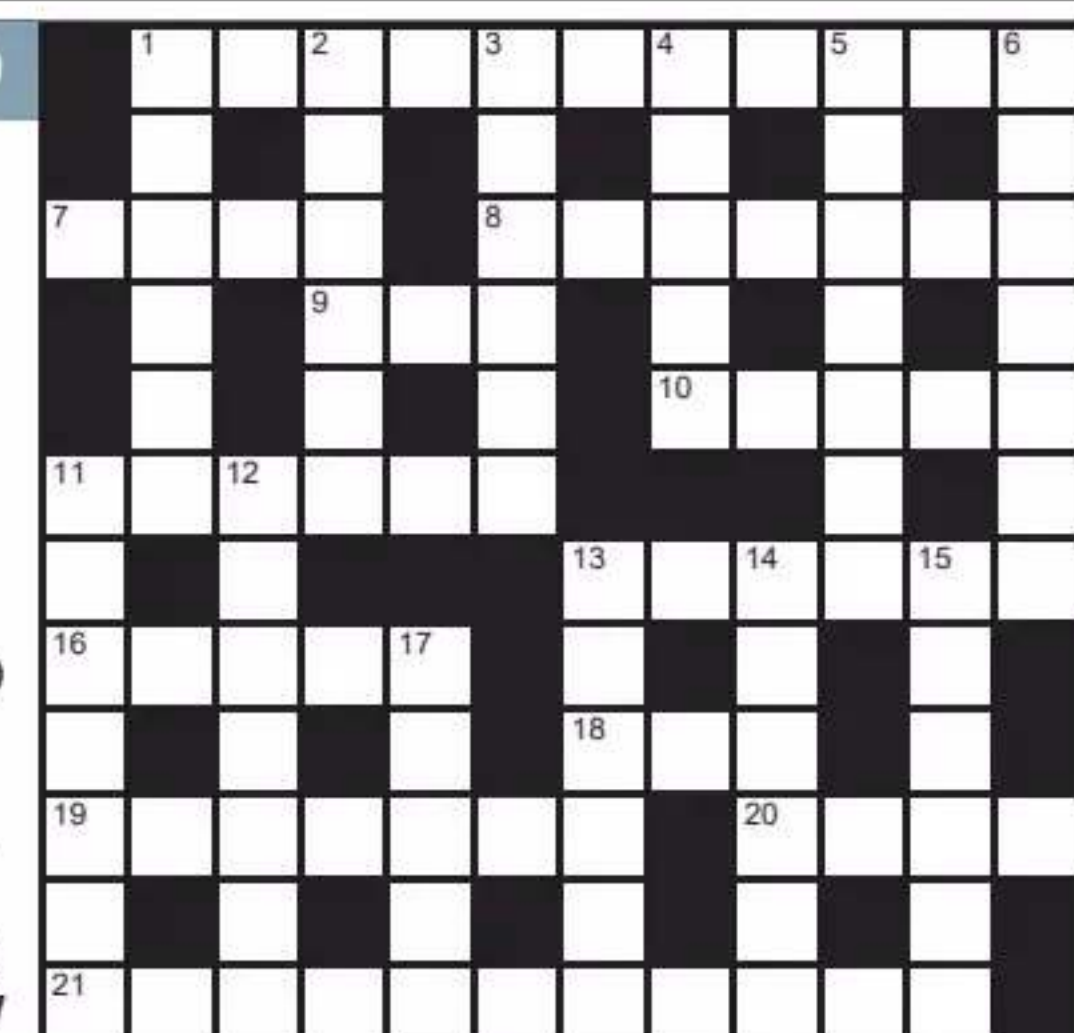
EURO 2024: MATCH ANALYSIS, PAGES 69-71

Jump for joy: Scott McTominay celebrates putting Scotland ahead against Switzerland in Cologne last night GETTY IMAGES

QUICK CROSSWORD 9,820

ACROSS
1 Difficult problem (5-6)
7 Performs on stage (4)
8 Childish fit of rage (7)
9 Cutting tool (3)
10 Rapidity (5)
11 Throw out as useless (6)
13 Republic of Ireland's capital (6)
16 Baked goods (5)
18 To doze (3)
19 Province of Canada (7)
20 Elderly (4)
21 Disease of rabbits (11)

DOWN
1 Develop into (6)
2 Australian, informally (6)
3 Foolish person (6)
4 Jessica _-Hill, British athlete (5)
5 Dreamlike (7)
6 Ninth month of the Muslim year (7)
11 Retrieve or recover (7)
12 Coin-operated machine found in pubs (7)
13 Ruler (6)
14 Avoidance road (6)
15 Loafers (6)
17 Rugby formation (5)

WEDNESDAY'S SOLUTION (NO 9,819) – ACROSS: 1 Streak. 4 Hotel. 7 Presuppose. 8 Iran. 9 Saves. 11 Palaver. 13 Lozenge. 15 Extra. 17 Weed. 18 Bombardier. 20 Deems. 21 Piping. **DOWN:** 1 Shrimp. 2 Earn. 3 Kestrel. 4 Hopes. 5 Two. 6 Leeks. 7 Pallet. 10 Veneer. 12 Round up. 14 Ending. 15 Embed. 16 Amass. 17 Weep. 19 Mae.
SOLUTION TOMORROW

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- Escorted by a tour manager

*From price based on October 1, 2025 from London Luton.

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- Escorted by a tour manager

*From price based on October 8, 2024 from London Gatwick.

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- Seven nights' four- or five-star bed-and-breakfast accommodation in Málaga (one), Seville (two), Córdoba (two), and Granada (two)
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- Tour of Granada with tour of Alhambra
- Escorted by a tour manager

*From price based on March 30, 2025 from Birmingham.

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8 days from **£1,170*** per person

- Selected departures between April and October 2025
- Return flights, coach travel and transfers
- Seven nights' bed-and-breakfast accommodation in Tallinn (two), Tartu (one), Riga (two) and Vilnius (two), plus two lunches
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- Escorted by a tour manager

*From price based on April 2, 2025 from London Stansted.

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8 days from **£1,031*** per person

- Selected departures between April and October 2025
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- Seven nights' bed-and-breakfast accommodation in Tirana (three), Vlore (one), Saranda (one), Gjirokaster (one) and Berat (one)
- Tours of Tirana, Durrës, Lezhë, Vlorë, UNESCO-listed Butrint and Gjirokastër
- Drive along the Albanian Riviera with visits to Llogara National Park, Ali Pasha Castle and Sarandë
- Day trip to Berat and the Apollonia Archaeological Park with visit to the Onufri Museum
- Escorted by a tour manager

*From price based on April 18, 2025 from London Stansted.

Croatian Island Hopping

8 days from **£1,688*** per person

- Selected departures between May and October 2025
- Return flights, coach travel and transfers
- Seven nights' half-board accommodation on board the supreme MS Equator, plus a welcome dinner and a Captain's dinner
- Visit to Bol and Jelsa
- Walking tour of Korčula with wine-tasting, Dubrovnik, Hvar and Split
- Guided tour and entrance to Mljet National Park
- Escorted by a tour manager

*From price based on October 4, 2025 from London Luton.

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12 days from **£4,233*** per person

- Selected departures between April 2025 and December 2026
- Return flights, coach travel and transfers
- Nine nights' full-board accommodation in Lake Manyara (one), Serengeti (two), Karatu (two) and all-inclusive accommodation in Zanzibar (four)
- All-inclusive package at your four-star Zanzibar resort with open bar service from 10am to 11pm on selected drinks
- Game drives in Lake Manyara, UNESCO-listed Ngorongoro Crater, Serengeti National Park and two game drives en route to and from the lodge
- Visit to the Olduvai Gorge prehistoric site and the Great Rift Valley
- Escorted by a tour manager and wildlife specialist

*From price based on April 17, 2025 from London Heathrow.

Istanbul, Ephesus & Troy with Ozdere Beach

14 days from **£1,628*** per person

- Selected departures between September 2024 and October 2025
- Return flights, coach travel and transfers
- 13 nights' accommodation in Istanbul (three nights' bed-and-breakfast), Canakkale (one night half-board), Bergama (one night half-board), Kusadasi (three nights' half-board) and Ozdere (five nights' all-inclusive)
- A full-day and a half-day tour in Istanbul
- Visit poignant ANZAC Cove
- Be amazed by the ruins of Ephesus, ancient Troy and Pergamon
- Escorted by a tour manager

*From price based on October 2, 2024 from London Gatwick.

On Safari in South Africa – Luxury Safari Plains with Mauritius

15 days from **£5,225*** per person

- Selected departures between March 2025 and November 2026
- Return flights, coach travel and transfers
- 12 nights' five-star all-inclusive accommodation at the Safari Plains camp, Limpopo (five) and Long Beach Resort, Mauritius (seven), plus five high teas and drinks service between midday to 10pm.
- An expert-led wildlife talk upon arrival
- Four game drives
- A sundowner with a drink and snacks
- A morning escorted bush walk, a traditional bush lunch and a stargazing experience
- A tour of Mauritius' southern region
- Escorted by a tour manager and wildlife specialist

*From price based on August 26, 2025 from London Gatwick.

Costa Rica – Wildlife, Rainforest & Caribbean Beach

13 days from **£3,787*** per person

- Selected departures between October 2024 and November 2025
- Return flights, coach travel and transfers
- 11 nights' three-star bed-and-breakfast accommodation in San Jose (one), Monteverde (two), Arenal (three), Sarapiqui (two) and Puerto Viejo de Talamanca (three), plus six lunches and five dinners
- Excursions to Poás Volcano National Park and Doka Estate with lunch
- Guided walk through the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve
- El Trapiche tour
- Caño Negro Wildlife Sanctuary boat tour
- Arenal Sky Walk tour
- Tour of a palmito plantation
- Visit to OTS La Selva Biological Station
- Escorted by a tour manager and wildlife specialist

*From price based on February 25, 2025 from London Heathrow.

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Mail Puzzles

SUDOKU

FILL in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 3x3 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9. **SOLUTIONS TOMORROW**

		3			6	9		2
					5	8		
5	9				1			
8	2							3
	1		7			6		9
9		7						
	7		9				4	8
2	8						3	
				6				

Difficulty rating ★★★★★

6	9	2						
			8	5				
								6
3		1				5	9	
	7	6				8		
	8		3	2	1			
5				9	2		1	
					7		4	
4					3		8	9

Difficulty rating ★★★☆☆

PRIZE SUDOKU

WIN £500

	6	2						1
3			1		4		■	
		1	3	5				6
	8	6		9		5	2	
	9				■	6		7
7	1							
		■	2		3	7	8	
8					6			9
				4				

REVEAL the three shaded squares for your chance to win £500. **HOW TO ENTER:** Call **0901 292 5009** and leave today's three-number answer (reading left to right) and your details. Or text **SUDOKU** to **65700** with your answer and name. Texts and calls cost £1 plus standard network charges. One weekly winner chosen from all correct entries received between 00.01 Monday and 23.59 Friday. Answers change daily at 00.01. UK residents aged 18+, excl NI. Full terms apply, see Page 54.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD

WIN A LUXURY CROSS PEN SEE BELOW

ACROSS

1 Richard Leakey, born in 1944, was a noted one (15)
8 A group of eight people or things (7)
9 Of comparatively greater physical weight (7)
10 ____ Gay, plane that, was the first to drop an atomic bomb in warfare, in 1945 (5)
11 Elton John's first solo UK No. 1 hit song, in 1990 (9)
12 Curtis, jazz singer noted for 1991 song I Wonder Why (7)
14 ____ Baggins, the title character and protagonist of J. R. R. Tolkien's 1937 novel The Hobbit (5)
15 Call someone ____, phrase meaning 'to abuse verbally' (5)
17 An act to extend the valid period of a licence, subscription or contract (7)
19 A record of research into a person or group's development over time (4,5)
22 A shelter with perches for fowl or other birds (5)
23 A person of high rank or eminence (7)
24 One who aims to instruct and improve, especially in moral and religious knowledge (7)
25 Preference or tendency to use a specific side for tasks involving dexterity, such as writing (5-10)

DOWN

1 Expression meaning 'falling just short of a successful outcome' (5,3,2,5)
2 ____ oxide, chemical compound commonly known as laughing gas (7)
3 The Blackwater and Humber are two of these in the UK (9)
4 Prospects typically of attractive natural scenery (5)
5 An African animal closely related to the giraffe (5)
6 Existing or occurring at the beginning (7)
7 Driving manoeuvres to make a vehicle face the opposite direction in a limited space (5-5,5)
9 Joan, an actress noted for playing Miss Marple on TV (7)
13 Phrase meaning 'on the way' (2,5)
14 Australian avian species, the male of which builds an ornamented structure to attract females (9)
16 A small feral horse in the U.S. (7)
18 Resembling a lion (7)
20 Anwar, Egyptian politician who succeeded Nasser as president (5)
21 To give way to demands or pressure (5)

SOLUTION TOMORROW

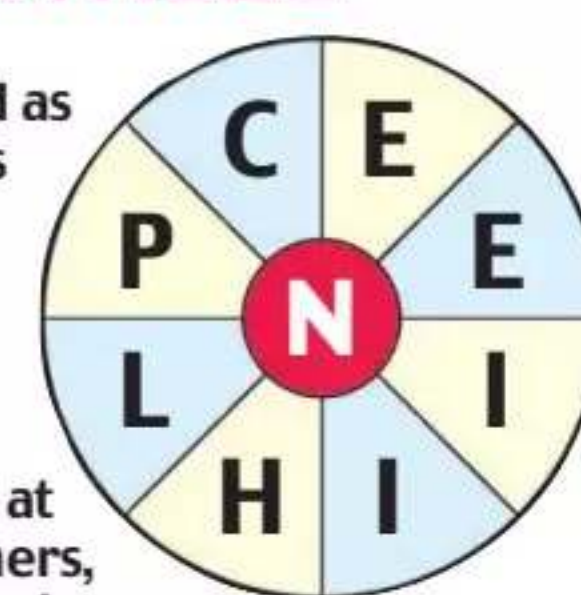
PLAY our accumulator game! Every day this week, solve the crossword to find the letter in the pink circle. On Friday, we'll provide instructions to submit your five-letter word for your chance to win a luxury Cross pen. UK residents aged 18+, excl NI. Terms apply. Entries cost 50p.

WRITE YOUR LETTERS IN THESE SQUARES

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri

WORD WHEEL

Letters: C, E, E, I, I, H, L, P; hub letter: N

YOU have ten minutes to find as many words as possible using the letters in the wheel. Each word must use the hub letter and at least three others, and letters may be used only once. You can't use plurals, foreign words or proper nouns. Verbs ending in 's' permitted. Clue for today's nine-letter word: A lover of films, Phil is totally blocked by network provider after Charlie is home. RATING: 8 words, average; 12, good; 16, very good; 18 or more, excellent. SOLUTION TOMORROW

SUDOKU X

4		3			
	6				
			2		3
	5				

PUT 1-6 once in each row, column, diagonal (highlighted to form an X) and horizontal 3x2 box (ruled). SOLUTION TOMORROW

NAME GAME

HIDDEN in the grid is the name of an actor. Answer the questions, then rearrange the letters corresponding to your answers to fill in the name. SOLUTION TOMORROW

BOX 1: Which actress is the wife of actor John Simm (pictured)?
Kate Phillips (N)
Kate Maberly (G)
Kate Magowan (T)

BOX 2: Lod in Israel is traditionally identified as the 4th-century martyrdom site of which saint?
Saint Patrick (W)
Saint George (I)
Saint David (S)

BOX 3: What is the name of the mysterious rabbit-costumed character in the 2002 film Donnie Darko?
Frank (L)
Fred (U)
Ferdinand (P)

BOX 4: The Freehold Raceway is the oldest horse racing track in which country?
Scotland (H)
United States (R)
Canada (B)

BOX 5: Alhambra is a palace and fortress complex located in which Spanish city?
Valencia (L)
Seville (V)
Granada (O)

BOX 6: Stringfellow Hawke was a character in which action TV drama of the 1980s?
Airwolf (Y)
The A-Team (C)
Knight Rider (A)

BOX 7: What type of animal is an oryx?
A bird (V)
An antelope (E)
A wild cat (G)

BOX 8: Paul Merson is a British former professional in which of these sports?
Rugby union (K)
Football (M)
Cricket (U)

Yesterday's solution: **UMA THURMAN** (1U, 2R, 3U, 4T, 5A, 6H, 7N, 8M, 9A, 10M)

Picture: PA

TRAIN TRACKS

LAY tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of rail go in each row and column. There are only straight rails and curved rails. The track cannot cross itself.

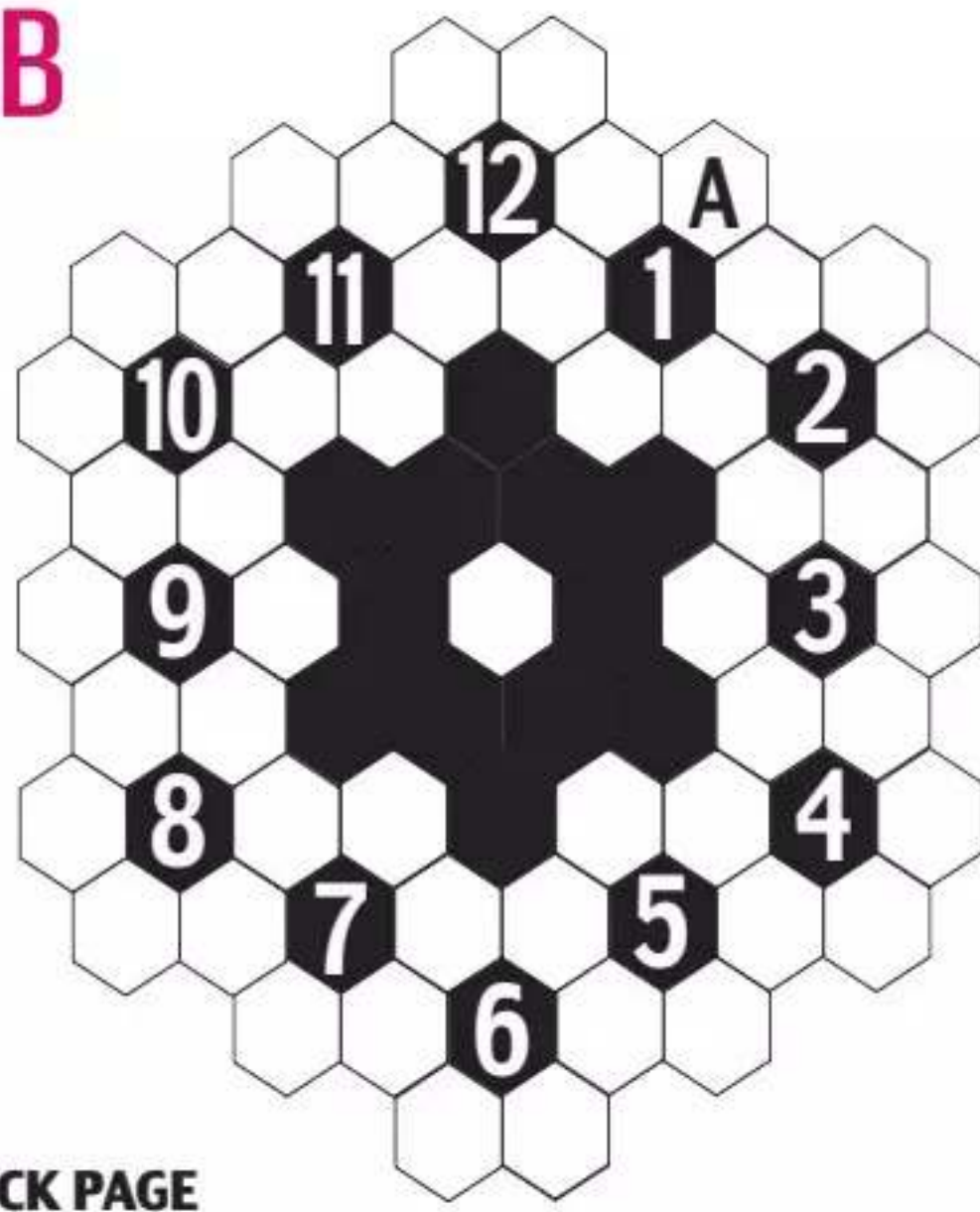
Column numbers: 5 1 1 2 2 5 8 5
Row numbers: 2 3 5 8 4 3 2 2

A — B

SOLUTION TOMORROW

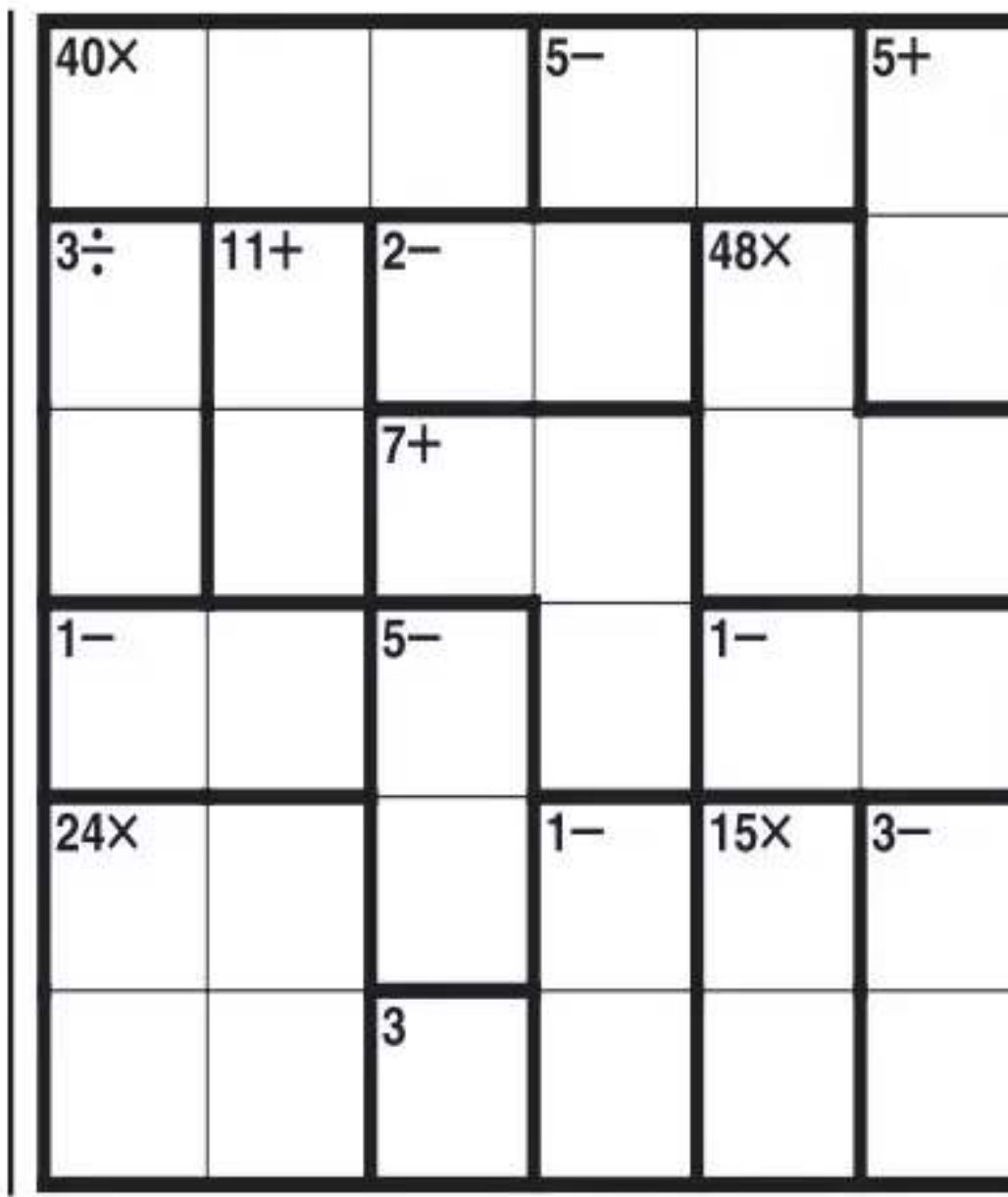
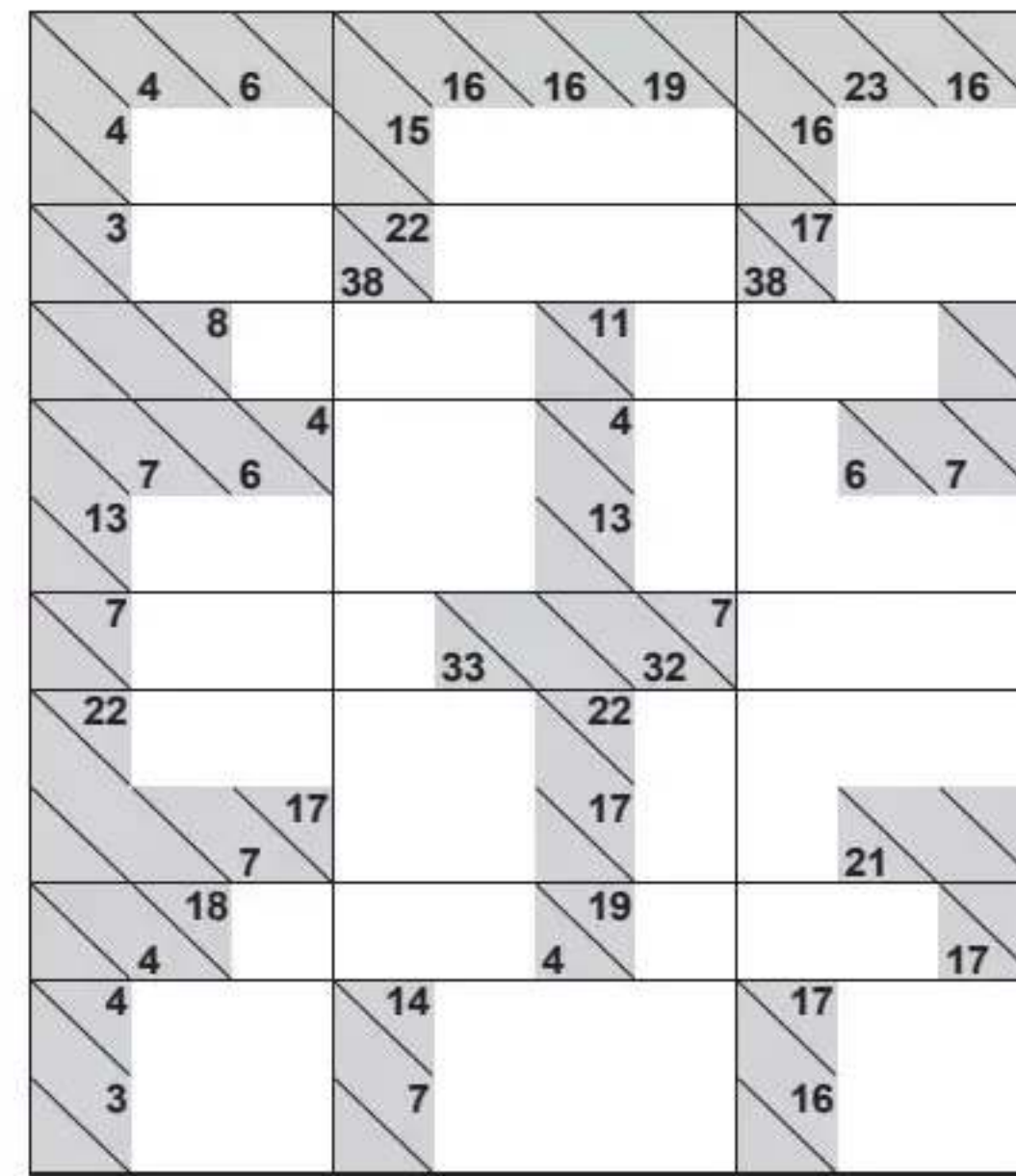
HONEYCOMB

ALL the solutions read clockwise around their numbers. The solution to clue number 1 starts from the given letter.

1. Fit
2. Red wine
3. Wears away
4. Discuss
5. Month
6. Less attractive
7. Harvester
8. Chutney
9. Doghouse
10. Tidy
11. Flourish
12. Goodness

SOLUTION: PULLOUT BACK PAGE

KAKURO

FILL in the blank squares of the grid using only the numbers 1 to 9, without repeating any number in any line of blank squares. The lines must be filled in with numbers which add up to the total in the shaded box at the top or beginning of each line. A number in the bottom half of a shaded box gives a downwards total; in the top half, it's a horizontal total.

SOLUTION TOMORROW

MASTERQUIZ

1. How many dots are there in total on a standard pair of dice?

2. What nationality is tennis champion Kim Clijsters?

3. Which bird has the largest wingspan?

4. What is the name of the sarsen at Stonehenge which marks the place on the horizon where the summer solstice sunrise appears when viewed from the centre of the circle?

5. Who became poet laureate in 1972?

6. Who led the Expedition Of The Thousand to capture Sicily in 1860?

SOLUTION: PULLOUT BACK PAGE

MINDBENDER

1. Of the six faces of a rectangular box, two have an area of 156 square centimetres, two have an area of 96 square centimetres, and two have an area of 104 square centimetres. What is the length of the longest side of the box?

2. What connects coffee, pepper and water?

3. In which English city is there an OVERNIGHT HOD BAN?

4. Which is the odd one out: Jack, Lauren, Lee, Abi?

5. Starting with E, add a letter and shuffle to make a new word each time until you reach STABILISER.

SOLUTION: PULLOUT BACK PAGE

KILLER SUDOKU

FILL in squares in the grid so each row, column and each 3x3 square contains all digits from 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the number in the top-left corner. Numbers can't be repeated within each set of cells.

SOLUTION TOMORROW

PITCHERWITS™

1a. Unlikely Nativity, with Sun in basin cabinets (6,5)

9a. A drudge? Could be wary! (7)

13a. Born to walk to Brer Rabbit's destination (7)

18a. Drift severs concoction for the dinner queue leader (5,6)

1d. The truly affluent who flew out of the flyover (4,4,3)

4d. Come to the front to wrap around and defrost (4,7)

6d. Rummage in the bag for an item of much data (7)

8d. Twin led the way, having existed inside (7)

PIT your wits against Pitcherwits — the exciting puzzle where some of the answers are in pictures! The solutions to the visual clues fit into the shaded spaces on the grid.

SOLUTION TOMORROW

ACROSS
1 Picture Clue
5 Conundrum, basically cut out from the dance (5)
7 Cracked tile bearing the best (5)
9 Picture Clue
11 After a while, trimmed back the day (3)
12 Swooped into court (3)
13 Picture Clue
16 Upset duo to exceed (5)
17 Cross out 'rate for more' (5)
18 Picture Clue

DOWN
1 Picture Clue
2 Posh topper, in absentia, ranked in the middle (5)
3 Turn through 90° and raise the limit? (5)
4 Picture Clue
6 Picture Clue
8 Picture Clue
10 The very edge of experimentation (3)
14 Roughly the other way (5)
15 Note where little brother is before the day before (5)

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION — ACROSS: 1 Bite-sized. 5 Pea. 6 Six. 7 Ingrain. 10 Cod. 11 Re-order. 12 Mar. 13 Comical. 16 Ill. 17 Elm. 18 Encompass. **DOWN:** 1 Bass drum. 2 Taxi. 3 Ivor. 4 Downstream. 5 Pencil case. 8 Norma. 9 Air miles. 14 Into. 15 Lira.

MAILWORD

ACROSS
1 Greek letter
5 Donkey's cry
9 Bob ---, singer-songwriter
10 Dress
11 Consider appropriate
12 Woes
13 Priest's vestment
14 Haughty
16 Peter ---, comedian
17 Cosy
18 Look at with suspicion
20 Gets closer
24 Italian city
26 Definite article
27 Mix socially
29 Lapsang, e.g.
30 Present
31 Definitely not
33 --- Major, Great Bear
34 Speculate
35 Quick pace
36 Proofreading term

DOWN
1 Informal farewell
2 2003 Christmas film
3 State of panic
4 --- Chekhov, playwright
5 Card game
6 Bap
7 Proficiently
8 Progressive rock band
9 Put off
11 Purpose
15 Small, light car
19 Optimistic
21 Affirm
22 Flightless birds
23 Dry up
25 Musical numbers
27 German title
28 Approximately
30 Shack
32 Price

SOLUTION TOMORROW

HIDATO

COMPLETE the grid so that all the numbers, 1 to 58, connect consecutively — horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Hint: you don't have to begin with 1 or 58. Working on the mid-numbers might give you a better start.

		34			45		48
			42			46	
36		■	■		54		
24			58				
	26	22			■		52
			28	■	■		5
	17			10		1	
		15	11				3

SOLUTION TOMORROW

KENKEN

EACH row and column should contain 1 to 6 without repeats. Numbers in cages must combine to produce the target number shown at start of that cage using, in any order, the mathematical sign given. Single-box cages can be filled with the number given.

SOLUTION TOMORROW

NINE TO FIVE

	S	T	A	
T				E
D				D
S				T
	K	S	D	

ARCHENEMY

FIT the scrambled letters of the given word into the grid to form six five-letter words across and down.

SOLUTION TOMORROW

WORLD'S SMALLEST, HARDEST CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1. Afr-Am dance (4)
5. Yours truly, facetiously (3)
6. Cloth of camel's hair (3)
7. Table d'___ (4)

DOWN
2. Shield boss (4)
3. Gravy utensil (4)
4. Three-toed sloth (2)
6. Sound of objection (2)

1	2	3	4
■	5		
6			■
7			

SOLUTION TOMORROW

CROSS NUMBER

THERE MAY BE MORE THAN ONE SOLUTION

				17
9				26
			5	19
	2			23
		3		24
27	20	23	22	32

By Linus Maurer ©2015 King Features Inc.

Today's challenge time: 5 mins 23 secs | Your working time: ___ mins ___ secs

FILL each square with a number, 1 to 9. Horizontal squares add up to totals on right. Vertical squares add up to totals on bottom. Diagonal squares through centre add up to totals in top and bottom right.

SOLUTION TOMORROW

CODEWORD

WIN £750

EACH number in our Codeword grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. Today 3 represents R, so fill in R every time the figure 3 appears. You have two letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares. **SOLUTION TOMORROW**

COMPLETE Codeword to reveal the word in the shaded boxes.
HOW TO ENTER: Call **0901 293 6232** and leave your answer and your details or text **65700** with the word **CODE**, your answer and then your name. Texts and calls cost £1 plus standard network charges. One weekly winner chosen from all correct daily entries received between 00.01 Monday and 23.59 Saturday. Answers change daily at 00.01. UK residents aged 18+, excl NI. Terms apply, see Page 54.

1	2	3	4	2	2	5	6	■	■	7	■	8
9	■	4	■	4	■	6	■	1	10	11	2	12
5	13	9	5	14	1	15	16	5	■	17	■	1
11	■	2	■	5	■	2	■	14	■	18	15	2
11	17	4	6	■	11	5	1	1	5	14	■	15
■	■	3	■	15	■	6	■	4	■	■	■	19
10	16	5	14	20	5	■	7	10	11	8	11	12
21	■	■	■	14	■	22	■	11	■	10	■	■
10	■	10	11	15	23	15	1	■	10	20	5	1
11	5	2	■	2	■	8	■	24	■	5	■	25
5	■	17	■	5	11	17	26	4	5	14	7	5
10	15	8	5	6	■	14	■	14	■	2	■	11
1	■	1	■	■	7	17	7	22	2	10	15	11

1	14
2	15
3 R	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20
8	21
9 P	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Yesterday:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
S	D	M	J	A	W	O	R	E	C	L	V	Y
14	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**	**25**	**26**
P	G	H	I	N	T	F	U	Z	K	Q	B	X

NEED A CLUE? Text the word **CODEWORD** to **65700** to receive FOUR clues to today's puzzle or call **0901 293 6200**. Texts and calls cost £1 plus your standard network charges. Today's clues available between 00.01 today and 23.30 only.

SCRABBLE® BRAND GRAMS

The board on the right shows four rows of letters from a typical Scrabble game. Use each row to form a word of 2-7 letters and write it in the blank squares provided. Then add up the score for each row. Don't forget to use the double and triple word and letter scores — and add a 50-point bonus for every 7-letter word. Blank tiles can be used for any letter but have no score. See tomorrow's paper for the solution.

Rack	Tiles	Bonus
RACK 1	I1 E1 L1 G2 B3 S1 O1	Triple Word Score
RACK 2	D2 L1 L1 R1 A1 Y4 B3	Double Word Score
RACK 3	I1 T1 S1 C3 E1 P3 D2	Triple Word Score
RACK 4	N1 A1 K5 I1 T1 G2 L1	Double Word Score

PAR SCORE 170-180 by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

Yesterday's solution:
BRUSHED 89
EARNEST 71
GREATER 74
BRUSQUE 104
JUDD'S TOTAL: 338

WORD SEARCH

WIN £500

C	S	L	A	U	R	E	N	L
R	H	C	F	L	F	U	E	U
E	A	O	O	R	R	W	C	X
C	K	B	I	B	L	E	C	U
O	E	P	J	C	S	H	A	R
R	S	O	I	S	E	A	S	Y
D	P	D	S	G	X	S	T	I
I	E	C	A	W	O	S	A	T
N	A	A	F	R	R	J	W	E
G	R	S	T	I	U	E	A	M
S	E	T	K	R	U	B	Y	T

THE listed words can all be found in the grid — running forwards, backwards, up, down and diagonally — EXCEPT ONE. For a chance to win, discover which word from the list can't be found in the Word Search.

BIBLE
CASTAWAY
CHOICES
KIRSTY
LAUREN
LUXURY ITEM
ODE TO JOY
PODCAST
RECORDINGS
SHAKESPEARE

HOW TO ENTER: Call **0901 293 6234** and leave your answer and details or text **65700** with the word **WORD**, your answer and your name. Texts and calls cost £1 plus standard network charges. One winner chosen from all correct daily entries received between 00.01 Monday and 23.59 Friday. Answers change daily at 00.01. UK residents aged 18+, excl NI. Terms apply, see Page 54. **SOLUTION TOMORROW**

QUICK QUIZ

1. In which year did The Beatles release their album Abbey Road?
2. What colour is San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge painted?
3. Which Frankie Dettori mount won the 2023 Ascot Gold Cup?
4. Which 1970s film features the Korova Milk Bar?
5. What is the first name of the astronomer after whom the Hubble Space Telescope is named?

SOLUTION: PULLOUT BACK PAGE

GOGEN

BRICK
GLUT
HOAX
PLATE
QUILTED
SHOWJUMPING
VERIFY

K		D		V
N		L		O
Y		Q		X

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y

INSERT letters to form listed words, moving between adjacent cells horizontally, vertically or diagonally in any direction. Insert all remaining letters of the alphabet (except Z) in the grid so all listed words are spelt out.

SOLUTION TOMORROW

BRIDGE MASTERCLASS

North
♠ 10 6 5 4 3
♥ A Q 7
♦ 7 6
♣ A 7 4

West
♠ A J 9
♥ 10 3
♦ A J 8 2
♣ Q J 9 6

East
♠ K Q 7 2
♥ J 9 6 5 4
♦ None
♣ K 10 5 3

South
♠ 8
♥ K 8 2
♦ K Q 10 9 5 4 3
♣ 8 2

YOU are defending 3♦ doubled from the East hand after declarer opened 3♦, and partner passed your reopening double. Partner led a ♥10, taken by declarer in dummy. A spade was led and won by partner, who returned the ♥3 won by the queen in dummy. Declarer played a trump to the king and ace, and partner played the Q♣, taken by dummy, and a second spade led.

IT seems likely that declarer has no more spades, however, you need to be careful. You need an entry to give partner a heart ruff, and if you play low to this trick, declarer will discard their remaining club, while partner has to win the trick, and your communication is gone.

Play a high spade now to guarantee your entry in one of the black suits, whether declarer ruffs or discards the club.

HEATHER DHONDY

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

WIN £500

No 17,384

ACROSS

1 Demolition of rusted cabin producing agitation (11)
9 Outwardly pretty cadet's first in jacket, imitative sort (7)
10 Tanya is excited to tour posh clubs in Mexican peninsula (7)
11 Undisguised conflict on reflection (3)
12 Dame following timeless group with jazz singer (7)
13 They practise decreasing activity? (7)
14 Sun by recreational area (not half) in resort (3)
15 Fanatical brigade's leader taking part in surprise attack (5)
17 Series with outsiders from Balkans, Belgrade citizens? (5)
18 Academic institution supported by workers' group (5)
20 Pull back from Isle of Wight town overlooking small river (5)
22 Short sleep in a pub? Not entirely (3)
24 Pinpoints a closet requiring repair (7)
25 Delight with Republican arrest first off (7)
26 Regular characters in striped neckwear (3)
27 Stray in distant area in Italian city (7)
28 A proposal in front of guests of an enduring nature (7)
29 Several mild reforms for runner-up's reward? (6,5)

DOWN

1 Wrongly omit placid officers guarding right ambassadors etc. in a place (10,5)
2 Slur ace represented as non-religious (7)
3 Zealot starts to upset local trader recruiting apprentices (5)
4 Bawdy wino out of order in projected space? (3,6)
5 Change in the U.S. reportedly, for director Mike (7)
6 Learner Rene I put off describing a business type? (15)
7 Brushes the surface of section on restraints? (6)
8 Extra payments initially discounted as burdens (6)
16 Support period hidden from the performing spotlight? (9)
18 Boost ahead linked to feature in a skyscraper? (6)
19 Figure put up with singer Michael in team sport (7)
21 Tourist worker was dishonest and gave an answer (7)
23 Formal undertaking in place on border (6)
25 Genuine end to mayhem in kingdom (5)

FOR your chance to win, solve the crossword to reveal the word reading down the shaded boxes. **HOW TO ENTER:** Call **0901 293 6233** and leave today's answer and your details, or **TEXT 65700** with the word **CRYPTIC**, your answer and your name. Texts/calls cost £1 plus standard network charges. Or enter by post by sending the completed crossword to Daily Mail Prize Crossword 17,384, PO Box 28, Colchester, Essex CO2 8GF. Please include your name and address. One weekly winner chosen from all correct daily entries received between 00.01 Monday and 23.59 Friday. Postal entries must be date-stamped no later than the following day to qualify. Calls and texts must be received by 23.59; answers change at 00.01. UK residents aged 18+, excl NI. Terms apply, see Page 54.

NEED A CLUE? Text **TIP** to **65700** to receive FOUR answers to today's crossword, or call **0901 293 6236**. Texts and calls cost £1 plus standard network charges. Today's clues available between 00.01 today and 23.30 only.

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S PUZZLES

SUDOKU

4	3	2	6	1	9	7	8	5
7	8	5	2	4	3	9	6	1
6	1	9	5	8	7	2	4	3
8	4	1	9	2	6	3	5	7
3	2	6	7	5	4	1	9	8
9	5	7	8	3	1	6	2	4
2	9	4	3	7	5	8	1	6
5	7	8	1	6	2	4	3	9
1	6	3	4	9	8	5	7	2

3	9	2	7	8	1	6	5	4
6	4	7	9	5	3	1	2	8
8	5	1	2	6	4	3	7	9
5	8	9	3	4	6	7	1	2
4	1	6	8	2	7	9	3	5
7	2	3	5	1	9	4	8	6
9	6	8	1	3	5	2	4	7
1	7	5	4	9	2	8	6	3
2	3	4	6	7	8	5	9	1

PRIZE SUDOKU

7	2	3	4	6	8	9	5	1
4	6	9	1	5	3	2	7	8
8	5	1	2	9	7	6	3	4
6	7	2	5	1	9	8	4	3
3	9	4	8	7	2	5	1	6
5	1	8	6	3	4	7	2	9
9	4	5	3	2	6	1	8	7
2	3	6	7	8	1	4	9	5
1	8	7	9	4	5	3	6	2

WORD SEARCH

Missing: WALK DON'T RUN

HIDATO

KAKURO

NINE TO FIVE

	R	E	U	
L	E	A	N	T
C	I	R	C	A
A	N	N	U	L
	S	S	T	

UNCANNIER

CROSS NUMBER

				28
3	9	8	5	25
7	2	6	4	19
5	8	7	3	23
9	3	5	2	19
24	22	26	14	14

TRAIN TRACKS

30-SECOND CHALLENGE

START on left with number given and follow instructions as you go across. In 30 seconds, beginners have to complete their own challenge; intermediates have to complete their own challenge and the beginner's; advanced players have to complete their own challenge and the intermediate's.

SOLUTION BELOW

www.30secondchallenges.com

											YOUR ANSWERS
Beginner	25	×8	-29	÷9	×4	-40	÷12	TIMES ITSELF	×8	1/4 OF IT	
Intermediate	12	×15	4/10 OF IT	-24	7/12 OF IT	×13	75% OF IT	-30	2/3 OF IT	5/9 OF IT	
Advanced	25	×72	PLUS 17 1/2%	40% OF IT	LESS 33 1/3%	75% OF IT	2/9 OF IT	×2 1/2	-10	12% OF IT	

KENKEN

5	1	3	2	4	6
6	5	4	1	3	2
2	6	1	4	5	3
3	2	5	6	1	4
1	4	2	3	6	5
4	3	6	5	2	1

SUDOKU X

5	1	4	3	2	6
3	6	2	1	5	4
4	5	1	2	6	3
6	2	3	4	1	5
2	4	6	5	3	1
1	3	5	6	4	2

KILLER SUDOKU

7	4	9	8	2	1	3	5	6
8	1	6	3	5	9	4	7	2
5	3	2	6	4	7	9	8	1
6	7	1	2	8	4	5	9	3
2	8	5	9	1	3	6	4	7
3	9	4	7	6	5	2	1	8
4	2	7	5	3	8	1	6	9
1	6	8	4	9	2	7	3	5
9	5	3	1	7	6	8	2	4

GOGEN

K	F	L	O	N
X	E	D	B	W
Y	G	C	I	M
H	A	R	U	J
P	T	V	S	Q

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD No. 17,381
ACROSS: 1 Scratchcards. 8 Anaemia. 9 Chirrup. 11 Reschooled. 12 Edge. 14 Frascati. 16 Wind up. 17 Ash. 19 Rumble. 21 Meringue. 24 Aura. 25 Transgress. 27 Drought. 28 Browser. 29 Kingsley Amis. **DOWN:** 1 Swansea. 2 Ramshackle. 3 Travolta. 4 Hacker. 5 Arid. 6 Derided. 7 Carry forward. 10 Peer pressure. 13 Dining room. 15 Ism. 18 Herne Bay. 20 Marconi. 22 Guesses. 23 Brutal. 26 Agog.

MAILWORD
ACROSS: 1 Crib. 5 Doors. 10 Daily. 11 Ravel. 12 Angle. 13 Arena. 14 Doh. 15 Saw. 17 Rat. 18 Seth. 20 Pebble. 22 Austria. 24 Abseil. 26 Blog. 29 Par. 30 Rye. 32 Ado. 33 Place. 35 Ernie. 37 Asian. 38 Locus. 39 Lands. 40 Stem. **DOWN:** 1 Canoe. 2 Right as rain. 3 Ill. 4 Byes. 5 Drawer. 6 Oar. 7 Overbalance. 8 Renal. 9 Slate. 10 Dads. 16 Aptly. 19 Hue. 21 Bib. 23 Sirens. 24 Appal. 25 Balsa. 27 Odium. 28 Goes. 31 Eels. 34 Cad. 36 Rot.*

WORLD'S SMALLEST, HARDEST CROSSWORD — ACROSS: 1 Tod. 4 Lobo. 5 Aloe. 6 Pul. **DOWN:** 1 Tolu. 2 Obol. 3 Doe. 4 Lap.

WORD WHEEL: acre, afar, agar, anger, arcane, area, areca, arena, arrange, cager, caner, carafe, care, carer, carn, carnage, carr, crag, crane, earn, facer, farce, fare, farer, fear, fern, **fragrance**, franc, garner, gear, grace, gran, nacre, near, race, racer, raga, rage, rager, rance, rang, range, ranger, rare, rear, reran.

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE CROSSWORD
ACROSS: 1 Jump cuts. 5 Plodda. 10 Sea lion. 11 Incomer. 12 Idina. 13 Rheometer. 14 Dead language. 18 Marty Feldman. 21 Genevieve. 23 Study. 24 Axolotl. 25 Ecomaps. 26 Tudman. 27 Asterism. **DOWN:** 1 Jessie. 2 Meanie. 3 Chicanery. 4 Tunbridge Wells. 6 Locum. 7 Domitian. 8 Air fryer. 9 Sixes and sevens. 15 Gladstone. 16 Emigrant. 17 Cranford. 19 Gulati. 20 Gypsum. 22 Viola.

SOLUTIONS TO TODAY'S PUZZLES

QUICK QUIZ: 1 1969. 2 Orange. 3 Courage Mon Ami. 4 A Clockwork Orange. 5 Edwin.
MINDBENDER: 1 13 centimetres. 2 They may all precede mill. 3 Brighton and Hove. 4 Lee; the others are Brannings in EastEnders. 5 One way is e, be, bet, bate, beats, stable, bestial, sibilate, sibilates, stabiliser.
MASTERQUIZ: 1 42. 2 Belgian. 3 Snowy albatross. 4 Heel stone. 5 John Betjeman. 6 Giuseppe Garibaldi.
HONEYCOMB: 1 Active. 2 Claret. 3 Erodes. 4 Debate. 5 August. 6 Uglier. 7 Reaper. 8 Pickle. 9 Kennel. 10 Neaten. 11 Thrive. 12 Virtue.

KUROSU

O	O	X	O	X	X
X	X	O	X	O	O
X	O	X	O	O	X
O	X	X	O	X	O
X	O	O	X	O	X
O	X	O	X	X	O

30-SECOND CHALLENGE:
Beginner: 18.
Intermediate: 90.
Advanced: 27.